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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON U.S. FOREST SERVICE ROAD MORATORIUM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREST AND FOREST HEALTH

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON U.S. FOREST SERVICE ROAD MORATORIUM

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1999

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS
AND FOREST HEALTH,
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, John J. Duncan, Jr. presiding.

Mr. DUNCAN. We are going to go ahead and call the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health to order. I want to, first of all, thank everyone for being with us; particularly the witnesses.

Mrs. Chenoweth, the Chairwoman of this Subcommittee, has become ill. So, I was planning to attend anyway. They asked me to fill in for her and Chair this particular hearing.

Today the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health convenes to review the Forest Service's current and proposed road management policies. In particular, we will focus on the Forest Service's progress in developing a long-term road management policy, which it initiated in January 1998; January of last year.

We will also look at the agency's 18 month moratorium on construction and reconstruction of roads in roadless areas; certainly, a very controversial subject.

This moratorium was first announced 13 months ago. It formally took effect only this week. This policy has generated a great deal of interest and concern over the past year.

Since the Forest Service should now be approximately 2/3 completed with the development of its long-term road management policy, I think we need to ask why the agency chose to announce, 3 weeks ago today, the beginning of the 18 month moratorium?

I fear it is because they have not accomplished much on the long-term policy. Last year, after his initial announcement of the moratorium, Chief Dombeck testified that the moratorium was not yet in effect.

In reality, it has been in effect ever since because the Forest Service's land managers immediately altered any plans they had to enter roadless areas that would qualify under the proposed moratorium.

By my count, that in effect really makes this a 2.5 year moratorium. One of the biggest concerns that many have with the moratorium is its effect on the condition of our forests.

The Forest Service has repeatedly told us that they have 40 million acres of national forest land at high risk of catastrophic fire.

Their new insect and disease maps verify that this risk is only increasing. Dr. David Adams, Professor of Forest Resources, Emeritus, at the University of Idaho submitted testimony for our hearing, but unfortunately could not attend today.

He is well-known for his work on forest health and sustainability. I think almost everyone greatly respects his views.

Dr. Adams wrote, "I am concerned that without adequate access, we will not be able to manage for sustainable forests."

[The prepared statement of Mr. Adams may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DUNCAN. I think many people are concerned that we may be under estimating the impacts of the moratorium. The Washington Office has reported how many miles of road and how much timber volume will be impacted in planned timber sales and forest projects over the next year.

Yet, we really have not received adequate information on the extent of the impacts on the local communities that will surely occur if the volume is not replaced by other sales available to the same local economies during the same period.

I hope that witnesses today will give us more details on the full impacts. I am particularly concerned, of course, about the effects in the Southern Appalachian area.

There are also great concerns about recreation access. We have two excellent witnesses available to address this subject. So, I look forward to the testimony of all of the witnesses.

I thank you for your willingness to appear before us today. I now will recognize Mr. Kind for any statement that he wishes to make.

Mr. KIND. I have none.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right. Then I will go to Mr. Peterson for any statement.

Mr. PETERSON. I do not have one.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, thank you very much.

We will then call up the first panel.

I believe the first witness scheduled is Mr. Stupak, but I do not see him here yet. So, we will go to the second panel, which is former Congressman Ron Marlenee, a friend of many of us here in the Congress, who is a Consultant for Government Affairs for the Safari Club International.

Ms. Kelita Svoboda, who is the Legislative Assistant for the American Motorcyclist Association. I appreciate both of you being here with us.

Congressman Marlenee, we will let you proceed first. Then we will go to Ms. Svoboda.

STATEMENT OF HON. RON MARLENEE, CONSULTANT, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL

Mr. MARLENEE. Mr. Chairman, former colleague, it is my pleasure to be here with you again.

The Safari Club International is an organization representing a broad spectrum of sportsmen. I thank you for having this hearing today and focussing on access. One of the greatest problems that sportsmen have today is access.

Madam Chairman, Subcommittee, the greatest threat to the future of hunting is sufficient access for those who are not of substantial means. It appears we now have an agency that is about to curtail that access even further than they have in the past.

I appear here today as a Consultant for Governmental Affairs for Safari Club International. In my 16 years in Congress, I served on committees responsible for forest management, in both Agriculture and the Resources Committees.

I have seen good management and I have observed bad management. I have seen good proposals and bad proposals. The proposal to unilaterally close roads is a bad proposal for sportsmen and other recreational users.

The proposal is so bad, that it has dedicated local professionals in the Forest Service shaking their heads. As a matter of fact, professionals bold enough to do so, are speaking out in opposition. Those who are not bold enough are privately expressing the resentment of the agenda of lock-up and lock-out.

At Missoula, Montana on February 6, 1999, in an AP wire story, Chief Dombeck equated recreational sportsmen to the timber industry and grazing.

He stated, "The recreation industry needs to take note. They need to look at some of the issues the timber industry ran up against 20 years ago. The side boards for recreation are no different than those for timber and grazing interests."

In the same delivery, he expressed satisfaction in the reduction of timber harvest by 70 percent during the past 10 years. Can we extrapolate from this that the Chief means or wants to see a similar reduction on our public lands in recreational use?

The road closure effort is not a timber issue, as the Administration has been trying to spin it. This is a reduction in access, in hunting opportunities, a reduction in recreational use, and can be termed a recreation/hunter, access issue.

The Chief congratulated those managers who proposed banning cross country travel with all terrain vehicles. Their proposal would limit ATV use to established roads and trails.

Then, if course, they propose to eliminate as many roads and trails as possible. This, of course, means ATVs would be really a thing of the past. It also has serious implications for snowmobiles.

The lock-up agenda is not new. I recall approximately 15 years ago, a coalition of privileged users set down on paper these goals and agendas they wanted to achieve:

(1) eliminate timber harvest;
(2) eliminate as many roads as possible;
(3) eliminate all mechanical motorized use;
(4) secure all of the wilderness possible;
(5) eliminate horses;
(6) eliminate hunting; and
(7) establish limits of human intrusion.

Of course, the Forest Service has in place regulation that does limit human intrusion through, what they have termed, limits of acceptable change.

Subcommittee, because access on public land is important to recreation, to game management, and to sportsmen, we would have

to question if the proposal to limit access on public land is a political decision.

The answer, the evidence that answers that question seems to indicate a strong yes. Of the seven items listed on the agenda, five have been or are being accomplished. The Purist, given the opportunity that they have, have not quite come to the point of eliminating and eliminating horses. However, ever increasing regulation and requirements on horses in wilderness is moving that way.

The protection of designated species is moving toward the limits of intrusion or limits of acceptable change. We have to question what happened to the validity of the forest management plans that everyone participated in that taxpayers spent hundreds of millions of dollars on?

We have to ask if the Forest Service is repudiating the credibility and credentials of its own personnel and the validity of its own findings? These were the professionals who evaluated the watersheds, the wildlife sensitive areas, the recreational needs, the validity of roadless and wilderness designations.

Now, the Forest Service appears to want to throw all of that out of the window and to unilaterally, without professional evaluation, without public input, throw it out the window.

We, as sportsmen, we question the intent of a suddenly conceived or politically-instigated concept that the bureaucracy must invoke a moratorium that involves themselves in a new round of evaluations of existing access to property that is owned by the American taxpayer.

If the Forest Service, Mr. Chairman, must persist in this duplicative effort, then sportsmen should have the opportunity to participate in a hearing on every forest. When ill feelings already exist about being denied access, then to deny them the opportunity for input is an insult to the elderly, the handicapped, the family-oriented recreationalists, and sportsmen.

We want to ensure that this new effort does not further erode an already diminishing access to public lands. Increasingly, sportsmen are coming up against pole gates, barriers, no motorized vehicle signs when they arrive at the edge of public property.

This Subcommittee, Mr. Chairman, should demand to know how many miles of roads have been closed in the past 10 years, and how many pole gates, and tank barriers have been put in the last 10 years. The Forest Service already has closed miles, and miles of road.

In closing, let me say in an effort to justify further road closures, the Forest Service implies that hunting in the forest system is having, in their document, is having a negative impact on wildlife.

They contend that access has led to "increased pressure on wildlife species from hunters and fishermen." My experience in Congress in dealing with the problem is that the Forest Service consults extensively with State Fish and Wildlife agencies. That the jurisdiction of fish, wildlife, and hunting is primarily a State right and responsibility.

Because of the Forest Service allegation which appears in their public document, because it impugns the role of hunting and conservation, because it denigrates the capability of State wildlife management, I would suggest that this Subcommittee require the

Forest Service to name even one state, one state, that is not fulfilling their obligation.

We know of none and resent the fact that this ill-thought out statement is being used to justify closure considerations that could be harmful to wildlife.

In closing, let me quote Bruce Babbit in February of 1996. "Many Americans do not realize what an enormous contribution hunters, anglers, recreational shooters make to conservation of our natural resources.

In fact, these individuals are among the Nation's foremost conservationists, contributing their time, money, and other resources to ensuring the future of wildlife and its habitat.

Under the Federal Aid Program alone, a total of more than $5 billion in excise taxes has been a total of more than to support State conservation programs."

This statement should be handed, personally handed, to Chief Dombeck with the question, do you really want to curtail, and to severely limit, one of the greatest conservation success stories of all time.

I thank you for your time, Mr. Chairman and Subcommittee members.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Marlenee may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you very much, Ron.

Ms. Svoboda, I am going to apologize to you. What I am going to do is Congressman Stupak has just come in. I am going to let—Bart, if you will step up. We will let you present your testimony.

Then we will let you get on your way because I know you have many other things that you need to be doing. So, we are pleased to have you here with us. You may proceed with your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. BART STUPAK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. STUPAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize for being a few minutes late there. I ask that my full statement be made a part of the record.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I am very concerned. I have testified before against the Forest Service's proposed moratorium of no roads in our National Forest.

I am very concerned that the moratorium on forest roads will undermine the hard work done by our local citizens and subvert agreements that have already been reached to manage our National Forests.

Mr. Marlenee mentioned the fact that a lot of money was spent on it. In my District, I have two National Forests; the Hiawatha and the Ottawa.

We have reached agreements with the Forest Service as to how these forests are going to be managed. To do it, we gave up some rights; the local people gave up some rights. We sat down with the Forest Service and said, let us reach some agreement.

Let us manage our forests properly so we can have healthy forests. We are above cost in the forests in my neck of the woods. We gave up certain things. Now, the government comes back 10 years

into these agreements and says, forget it. That agreement is going to be superseded by new policy out of Washington.

We cannot continue to have government that enters into an agreement with people, and then because of a change in policy, we break those agreements. Those are binding agreements. They should remain in force.

Mr. Chairman, when you do this, if you stop the roads in National Forests, then you have no access to the timber. So, what do you do? You put pressure then on the State forests and private lands to open themselves up.

So, if there is an environmental concern, you may be protecting that piece of environment in the National Forest, but you are putting greater pressure and degrading the environment on private property and State forests because they will not be able to handle the increased demand to access the timber on State and private lands.

The Forest Service, itself, estimates that 40 million acres of its forests are at great risk of being consumed by wildfire. In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, we are getting disaster aid because of the drought we had last year.

We have not had much snow this year. That timber is ready to explode. How do you get to it if you do not have roads? I mean, all you are doing is you allow the trees to die if you do not have access to it; more trees rot every year since 1991 than we are cutting up there.

If that is the case, you are just creating a great fuel source for forest fires. When you have a region that is in a drought, one strike of lightning, then we are going to have some problems up there. That is another thing I wish we would take a look at.

Also, we have the risk of not just forest fires, but also disease. You cannot have proper management if you cannot get to the forests. So, I think this policy is ill-advised, to say the least.

The impact just on jobs. Again, let me go back to my testimony last year. The Administration, with some information provided by them, felt that as the result of the policy, probably 12,000 jobs would be lost throughout the United States.

I know 12,000 does not sound like a lot throughout the United States, but in a District where even right now in these big economic boom times, we are still running at 7 percent unemployment.

Most of my District is timber-related. That is going to significantly impact upon my District. I know that people say well, look, these roads are just there to support big companies.

I disagree. The big companies in my District, like Champion, Meade, and Louisiana Pacific, they have their own forests. They manage them. In contrast, the small operations, in order to feed their mills, whatever it may be, veneer, the plywood, or the paper mills, it is the little guy, the mom-and-pop operation that is out there cutting the timber, trucking it to the mills, and trying to make a living.

Those are the people who are really hurting with this policy. It is not the big paper companies, the big forest producers, or timber producers.

Also, Mr. Chairman, we fail to recognize that local communities benefit when we do have cutting on National Forests because 25 percent of the money that is generated off the timber sales go into local units of government, into PILT payments, and for local taxes to provide for the schools, to provide for emergency management, to provide for the local government services that we need.

So, it is reported that if this policy goes into effect, that 25 percent really represents $160 million in revenue at local school boards, road commissions, that everybody else would lose.

So, Mr. Chairman, when you take a look at it, not only are we concerned about the environmental impact and the economic viability of the timber programs, I am afraid that the working men and women in small rural communities, like I represent, are really the ones who are at the short end of the stick.

We entered into agreements about 10 years ago on the Hiawatha and the Ottawa. We had an agreement to properly manage our forests. It is working. It is working well.

Now, because of a proposed change in policy here in Washington, that trust of government is being, once again, eroded, and our economic base, our tax base, and even our job base would be adversely impacted by this policy.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time. I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stupak follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. BART STUPAK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Madame Chair, thank you for holding this hearing today and for allowing me the opportunity to offer my comments on this important issue. As I testified before this Committee last year on this matter, I have a number of concerns regarding the Forest Service's roads moratorium. This moratorium undermines years of hard work in our national forests and threatens forest health, jobs in the forest industry and our local communities.

First, I am very concerned that the moratorium on forest roads will undermine the hard work by our local citizens and subvert agreements that have been reached in managing our Federal lands. In Michigan, a number of parties from all sides of the forestry debate spent years negotiating a management agreement for two national forests in my district, the Ottawa and Hiawatha. A moratorium on new forest roads could jeopardize these agreements, as well as countless others like it around the nation. Instead of allowing regional foresters and local citizens to determine how their forests should be managed, a bureaucratic decision has been made in Washington, DC to impose this moratorium on the entire nation.

Second, this moratorium could have an adverse effect on forest health. Since 1991, more trees die and rot each year in national forests than is sold for timber. This new policy will only increase this trend, promoting the outbreak of disease and creating fuel for forest fires. The Forest Service itself estimates that 40 million acres of its forest are at great risk of being consumed by catastrophic wildfire, the majority of which are located in roadless areas. Without the ability to conduct proper forest management activities, the risk of disease outbreak and forest fires increases dramatically.

Thirdly, the roads moratorium could have a significant impact on jobs in the forest industry. According to information provided by the Administration last year, more than 12,000 jobs could be lost as a result of this policy. In my district, which already suffers from high unemployment, the forest industry is one of my top employers. I am very concerned that this moratorium on road building will also cause a moratorium on forest industry jobs.

In addition, this policy could harm the environment on state and private lands. In order to meet the terms of contracts, timber companies will be forced to seek alternative sources of wood to replace the timber that is restricted by the moratorium. As a result, the pressure will increase to cut more timber on state and private lands, possibly threatening the environment on these lands. Placing a blanket, na-

tional moratorium may stop road building on Federal lands, but in exchange, it could severely threaten the environment on state and private lands.

Finally, the moratorium could also have a drastic effect on our local communities. By law, counties with national forest lands receive payments equaling 25 percent of gross Federal timber revenues. These payments are used by county governments, districts and school boards for education programs and road maintenance. The Forest Service has been reported to have estimated that this policy could result in the loss of $160 million in revenue—a conservative estimate at best. At a time when the PILT program remains woefully underfunded, local communities may be the hardest hit by this moratorium.

Madame Chair, in closing, I would like to touch upon one last, important point. Many of the arguments surrounding these discussions focus on the environmental impact and economic viability of timber programs. While these are certainly important issues, I am afraid that lost in this debate is the impact a roads moratorium would have on working families and rural communities.

As I have stated before, our forests are a vital part of our economy and livelihood in my congressional district. With three national forests in my district, thousands of working families literally rely on these forests to put food on the table. Many people think of the timber industry as giant businesses that slash and clear cut forests simply for profit. The truth is, however, that the majority of people in the timber industry are family businesses—"mom and pop" operations that are struggling to make ends meet and that truly care about our forests and environment.

While attempts to cut forestry programs on our national forests may be made in the name of environmental protection or aimed at large corporations, that is not where their impact is felt the most. Not only do these cuts negatively impact forest health, but they also hurt our counties, our schools, our road programs, our emergency services, and our working families. We, and our forests, can ill afford to continue down this path.

Again, thank you, Madame Chair, for holding this hearing on this important issue. I hope that we can reconsider this ill-advised policy and, instead, work to address the problem of forest health in the future in a more effective and reasonable manner.

Mr. DUNCAN. Bart, I thank you very much for an excellent statement. I particularly appreciated your comment that the big companies are able to get along just fine, but it is the little mom-and-pop operators that are hurt.

These environmental extremists who almost always come from real wealthy backgrounds hurt the poor and the working people worst of all because they destroy jobs, drive up prices, and really in the process they become the best friends that extremely big business has, but they hurt the small people the most, whether it is the small coal operators, the small farmers now through agricultural runoff.

I mean, it is the small mom-and-pop, and individual operations in every field and industry that is being hurt the most. I think that is a very important point that you have made.

I Chair the Aviation Subcommittee and generally with the members who come to testify, we just let them testify and then go on because we have other witnesses and we have chances to discuss these with members on the floor.

If anyone has any comments or questions that you would like to say to Bart or ask Bart before he leaves. Mr. Peterson, do you have anything?

Mr. PETERSON. What has been the reduction in the last 10 years of board feet cut in your area?

Mr. STUPAK. Actually, we have a management plan. As I said, it was a 50 year management plan. It has been reduced more than 50 percent. I think this year it might hit as high as 60 percent reduction.

So, again, that timber cutting, while it is not going on in National Forests, it is going on in our private forests and also on the State forests. So, it has been about a 60 percent reduction.

Mr. PETERSON. In your area, is the National Forest the most mature forest anywhere?

Mr. STUPAK. Yes, it would be. Pennsylvania is by far the most mature forest we have. We have actually taken tracts of land where we have private land owners, State forests, maybe Champion Paper Company, and the Federal forests.

We have taken large tracts of land and said, let us all work together cooperatively to have a healthy forest, and I will give up some rights as a private land owner. You give up some rights, Forest Service. We reached these agreements.

They are still going on, but I will tell you. There is much resistance to even enter into any kind of agreement with the Forest Service, if every year we are up here fighting these policies that really have economically hurt us and you cannot trust the government anymore.

Mr. PETERSON. When this policy was instituted, if my memory is correct, it was an 18 month cooling off period, sort this thing out. There was no argument in my District. Is there an argument in your District or is it a Washington argument that needs the cooling off?

Mr. STUPAK. Well, there is no argument in my District. They are adamantly opposed to it. Champion Paper was in yesterday. It was in on a tax issue, not on this. I said, I am going to testify tomorrow for the Interior Subcommittee.

What about this road policy? I think I know, but are you not concerned about it? They said, no, we are not concerned about it. We have enough land in Upper Michigan, Northern Wisconsin, Minnesota. We can feed our mills.

The ones that are going to be hurt are the mom-and-pop companies, the Mishaws, Bernawskis, St. Johns, all of the folks who cut timber up there. They are the ones who are going to be put out of business.

Mr. PETERSON. It is raising the value of the big boy stakeholders. It is raising the value of their stock.

Mr. STUPAK. Correct.

Mr. PETERSON. So, actually it is pro-big business. It is anti-small business and devastating to the hunter and sportsman.

Mr. STUPAK. Correct.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Kind.

Mr. KIND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to welcome my friend, my neighbor to the North of me, Mr. Stupak, since we also have some forest land in Wisconsin, and Mr. Stupak has quite a bit in the Upper Peninsula, which is a beautiful area; not only economically, but for the tourist trade.

That is one of the questions I have for you right now. Do you have any anecdotal evidence that you can share with the Subcommittee today in regards to the economic impact that the moratorium is already having in your Congressional District?

To what extent is that economic impact? Is it the timber-related industry or tourism industry that is being affected?

Mr. STUPAK. I do not have it all together. If the Subcommittee would like, I would be happy to put it all together. Not only do we have hunting and fishing, but also snowmobile trails right now.

With all of the snow we have up there, it is good. The total impact, again, you are just limiting access to the forests. If they truly are National Forests, should we all not enjoy them? They are not only just for the paper industry and the forestry industry, but also for hunters, fishermen, snowmobilers, skiing.

There is a ski resort up there in the Ottawa National Forest. These are all accessable, as well as cross country skiing. So, it would probably be hard to come up with a figure, but we would, if you would like.

Mr. KIND. Has that access been limited as far as the snowmobile trains or skiers getting to the resorts up there?

Mr. STUPAK. Not the skiers, because usually the downhill is pretty much defined. Some are cross country. Where access has been somewhat denied, is in the hunting area, the camping area, and some of those areas.

Mr. KIND. You mentioned the possibility of some high risk burn areas as a consequence of this moratorium. Is that accessibility more limited because of the inability to create the roads to get into these back areas or just road maintenance and repair? What is your greatest concern?

Mr. STUPAK. It is more just getting into them. As you know, when you have a fire out there, you try to use your four-wheel drives and everything else to get out there. Then you have to get access the nearest stream or body of water to pump the water towards the fire.

To do that, you have got to use some of these pumper trucks. It takes a little bit more. In the areas where we had the problems last year, we had trouble with access to it because there were no roads.

It is more of the older, more mature forests where the fuel is lying on the ground; the rotted trees that really spark the fires. Unfortunately, that is what it was. I am pleased to say it was not because of careless campers or things like this. It was the dry season. It was the lightning and things like that, that caused it. So, we did have trouble last year with access through the area because there are no roads.

I am not saying you go put a road in all of the time. But if you want to try to save some timber, you are going to have to move pretty quickly. Yes, we do need roads.

Mr. KIND. I am not familiar with the anticipated fire conditions in the Upper Peninsula right now. Do you have that? Is there any anticipation at this point?

Mr. STUPAK. Right now, we have got some snow and hopefully we will get some more. I know all last year, it was drought conditions.

Our forest fire risk was high. One of the things I worked on last week was to get some of the farmers' non-cash crop, even the hay, drought relief. There is actually disaster relief for them. We are trying to move those things along.

If you look at the snow content, we really did not have any snow around up there until around Christmas, which is about 2 months

late. We have had a little bit of rain. So, there is not that much ground covered.

For about 6 weeks we had heavy snowfall and we have had nothing since then. So, we are very concerned about drought conditions. This year, it might be worse. The lake levels are way down; the Great Lakes.

Mr. KIND. Finally, do you have a little different perspective that you are bringing here today, given the fact that you are dealing with forests in the Upper Peninsula, east of the Mississippi, second and third growth forest areas, as opposed to some of the National Forest out West?

Mr. STUPAK. Yes. I mean, we are second and third generation. If you look at it, I believe it is Region 9 in the Forest Service where we fall. We are considered the most efficient users of our forests.

We have been cut over two or three times, as you indicated. So, it was important for us to enter into management plans early on. We have done that. Actually, the first management plan in the United States was found in Northern Michigan in managing our forests.

We all came together. Everyone came together; environmentalists, the Forest Service. Everyone came together to put forth a way to manage our forests. By managing the forests, we have better forests, better valued timber, healthier forests.

As I indicated in my testimony, we are now above cost, as opposed to a below cost forest. That is just good management practice. I am afraid with these policies, well, they may be well-intended, but you defeat the management that you have to have of your forests. Like anything else, like a garden, you have got to take care of it. You have got to weed it. You have got to nurture it. You have got to take care of it.

Mr. KIND. Before I run out of time, just one more question. I wish I was more versed on this subject and had the data in front of me.

Did the Forest Service run any numbers, economic projections on the potential economic impact in breaking it down from the different National Forest across the country? Have you seen it? What would be the impact in the Upper Peninsula of that?

Mr. STUPAK. I have not seen it. What we could dig up for the testimony we have been giving for the last couple of years is that approximately 12,000 jobs would be lost. I cannot tell you how many would be in my District.

I can tell you that the revenue payments, again, the PILT payments, the 25 percent of the gross Federal timber revenues, that we would probably lose. It is a loss of at least $160 million in revenue.

That is somewhat of a conservative estimate. I probably could break it down by each forest, based on those figures that we have received from the Forest Service.

Mr. KIND. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Kind. Mr. Hill.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kind, just for the record, you may be interested to know, in my District 6 of 13 National Forest are affected; 42 projects. It involves 88 miles of road, and 31 million board feet; about 5 percent

of the planned Timber Harvest Program. You can get that by forest.

Bart, I really appreciate your testimony. I am just curious, are there any of the areas that are being impacted in the forests in your District are proposed designation for wilderness or any special status in the future?

Mr. STUPAK. Yes. We have a number of them. I know of at least two that are pending. In these management plans, we do have the wilderness areas set aside. We are not proposing going in there and building roads in there.

Mr. HILL. Those were already roadless areas.

Mr. STUPAK. Those were already designated.

Mr. HILL. Those were already set aside.

Mr. STUPAK. Correct.

Mr. HILL. In my District, what is being impacted by this roadless moratorium are areas that had already been determined as not suitable for wilderness. Is that the same as true in your District?

Mr. STUPAK. That is correct.

Mr. HILL. In other words, what we are talking about here is these were forest lands that were determined to be suitable for multiple use, including timber harvest. Now, they are saying that we do not want to build roads in those areas. There is concern in my District that the way this is crafted, the consequence of this is going to be that roads are going to be obliterated.

Areas are going to be added to the proposed areas. Then these will be redesignated as potentially suitable for wilderness. Do you have that kind of a concern as well?

Mr. STUPAK. Correct; especially along the Bruell and a couple of the others over in the Ottawa.

Mr. HILL. How do you feel that, that impacts the collaborative processes that you have tried to promote in your District?

I have tried to promote people working together to try to deal with the contentiousness of these timber and public management issues. This just seems to knock the legs from underneath those people that have spent years trying to negotiate through a collaborative process. Do you feel that too?

Mr. STUPAK. Oh definitely. I mean, when you go there, I am going to be holding town hall meetings in the Hiawatha National Forest this weekend; Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon.

I am sure this issue will come up. I have been here now for 7 years. I have got a good working relationship with my community. However, it is sort of hard to believe the representative of the government when you enter agreements, and, you know, probably 7 years into the agreement, we start having these road moratorium proposals. We fought them on the floor, I think, just about every year I have been here. You cannot continue to say, look, we want to change the agreement.

We all sign an agreement. We give up certain rights and obligations. Then the ink is not even dry, and five years later and now 10 years later, here you are trying to take away the livelihood for the forests that you promised we would have access to. Now we are no longer going to have access to them.

Mr. HILL. It may interest you to know that I have 48,000 square miles of public lands in my District. Most of that is forest land. I

have a pulp mill in Western Montana that is the second most efficient pulp mill in this company's 30-something pulp mills. It is the highest cost.

Do you want to know why it is the highest cost? Because the cost of chips. The cost of chips in Montana is the highest. They are in all of their mills. We have about 5 million square acres, I think, of Montana that is impacted by this roadless area.

None of that is determined to be suitable for future wilderness designation. Let me just ask you a couple of questions. Do you see anything positive in terms of the forest health of the forests in your District as a consequence of this moratorium?

Do you see anything that is going to help improve the forest health through this moratorium?

Mr. STUPAK. No. If anything, I think it takes away from it.

Mr. HILL. Do you see anything in this moratorium that is going to improve tourism, and the attraction of tourism to your District as a consequence of this?

Mr. STUPAK. No.

Mr. HILL. Do you think that this is going to reduce the fire hazard that exists in the forests? Incidently, in my District, I have got 3 to 5 million acres that have been designated as high hazard, catastrophic, risk forests in my District.

Mr. STUPAK. So, that would probably increase the fire hazard.

Mr. HILL. Right. How dependent are the residents in your District? I assume they, like in my District, they live there because they like the quality of life. They hunt and they fish on the public lands. How important are the public lands to recreational hunters, fishermen, and women in your District?

Mr. STUPAK. Well, it is very important to us. My District is based on our natural resources, not only do we have forest products, but we also have mining. We have lived there. We have been there for generations up there.

We have taken good care of them. We were willing to work with the government to enter into agreements to continue. It is in our best interest to take care of our forests. That is what we are trying to do.

Mr. HILL. And you have.

Mr. STUPAK. We cannot with contradictory policy every few years.

Mr. HILL. Do you see anything in this moratorium that is going to make these lands more available for hunting and recreation?

Mr. STUPAK. No.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Hill. Thank you, Mr. Stupak for being with us today.

Before we go on to Ms. Svoboda, I do want to call on the Ranking Member, Mr. Smith, for any statement or comments that he wishes to make at this time.

Mr. SMITH. I apologize for being late. I had another committee meeting, meeting at the same time. I think this is a very important topic. I appreciate Representative Stupak coming and talking about it.

I will say at the outset that I have sort of a mixed opinion on roads. You know, the whole issue here is really logging on public lands.

I, for one, think that we do need to continue doing that. Obviously, if you are going to continue doing that, you are going to need roads to accomplish it. I agree with much of what I have heard, since I arrived this morning, in terms of concerns about access, recreation, proper use of our wilderness areas, and our forest areas for both logging purposes and personal recreation purposes.

I am sure it is true in Michigan and in Wisconsin, as well as it is in the Pacific Northwest. That is a big part of the reason why people want to live out there, is their access to those lands.

We certainly need the timber We certainly need the jobs. But we have a problem that has been going merrily on for quite some time. I know there are a lot very bright, very capable, very well-meaning people who have been working on this problem for some time trying to come up with a solution.

We have somewhere in the neighborhood of 383,000 miles of road spread out from one end of the country to the other; a lot of them in the Pacific Northwest, as well as in other areas.

These roads are causing very severe environmental problems, in our neck of the woods. I am not familiar with elsewhere. The biggest parts of those problems are what it is doing to our fish; our salmon and trout.

We are about to be hit with an ESA listing in the Puget Sound Region that is going to have a devastating impact. It is the first endangered species listing in a major urban-suburban area in the country.

That is going to be an issue. A part of the problem is the roads, when they are improperly maintained start to fall apart; start to get into the water supply; start to cause slides and a variety of other problems that lead to the devastation, frankly, of the habitat for these fish.

So, there are ecological problems there. We have had a dramatic increase in flooding in the Puget Sound Region in the last 10 to 20 years. There are a whole lot of things that caused that.

A part of that is the fact that there are the slides and are the situations that are occurring with the poorly maintained roads. It is also potentially damaging to the water supply, which we are all very dependent on in a variety of ways.

In the Puget Sound Region, we are dependent upon the water supply for power; hydroelectric. If we cannot continue to maintain that or if the ESA listing comes in and causes a problem with that, we are going to need to do something about it.

The problem is maintaining the roads. I mean, I completely agree with you. You cannot log if you do not build roads. I think it is good policy to maintain them. Where is the plan to deal with all of the environmental and ecological damage that has been caused by the roads that have been abandoned and poorly maintained?

I am not pointing fingers. The Forest Service and a lot of folks on both sides of the issue have blame for that. But we need something to come up with a plan for dealing with that.

Maybe building the roads better; maintaining them better; I do not know. So, that is where I am coming from. I want to know

what we are going to do about the existing roads so that we can deal with that.

Mr. KIND. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. STUPAK. If I may, I mentioned the 50 year plan we did on the Hiawatha. I went back to when we first started and the first year we met our target; so much board feet. Everybody was very happy.

Every year since then it went down. So, I said, what is going on here? So, I looked at how many employees did the Forest Service have when we started the plan? How many employees did the Forest Service have after 10 years of the plan?

Why have we lost about 50 percent of our board feet? Well, they had, I think, exactly the same number of employees, except maybe instead of having 32, they had 31 at the end of 10 years. All of the responsibility shifted from Forestry and Forest Management to other things like Anthropology, Historian, all kinds of things that did not deal with the day-to-day management of the natural resource being the forests.

So, instead of having the experts who knew how to do things and put up a proper timber sale to make that the road—and remember, it is the Forest Service who decides where the road goes, not the logger—where this should go. We did not have the people there to do it any more because we were busy doing all of these other things.

Mr. KIND. Please do not misinterpret my comments. I realize I am the only one who is not just bashing on the roadless plan here. Do not misinterpret me.

I am not saying the Forest Service is good and the logger is bad; not by a million years.

Mr. STUPAK. What I am trying to say is the emphasis has changed from managing our forests to doing all kinds of other things. If you want to prevent erosion, improper roads, runoff, and silting of our streams, remember in my District is the Big Two Hearted River where Hemingway wrote about and all of these others.

We have trout streams and everything else. If you would manage the resource and leave the people to do the managing in the Forest Service instead of having them do all of these other things that comes from Congress. Congress is just as guilty here of micro-managing.

Maybe we would not have had all of these problems that we are seeing.

Mr. KIND. That would certainly help. I do not know that it would maintain 383,000 miles of existing roads, but it would certainly help.

Mr. HILL. Would the gentleman yield for a brief comment?

Mr. KIND. If I have time, sure.

I appreciate my friend from Washington's statement. I think you crystallized the real issue on both sides of this moratorium very, very well.

One of the great concerns and great challenges that we face right now in this Congress is how to deal with the repair and maintenance of already existing roads. I think I saw a study that shows

that only 18 percent of the existing roads right now in National Forest comply with safety and environmental standards.

That is a huge issue and a big challenge that we face. I do not think it is at all inappropriate for us to be able to step back and take a look at that aspect of it as well.

I look forward to working with my friend from Michigan and see if we can think of some creative ways to try to get some more money appropriated for the repair and maintenance of roads that are causing, as Mr. Smith indicated, countless damage right now in a whole host of areas.

Mr. HILL. Would the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. KIND. Well, actually, I am going to say something and then I will yield to you. I think that is absolutely true. Let us not pretend that the roadless policy just got developed because people just are not that bright.

I think the policy was generated from the thought that, okay, we have got all of these roads we cannot maintain. As at least a starting point, let us stop building more that we cannot maintain.

Now, I understand that has a lot of side effects. Because of those side effects, I am not sure I think it is such a wonderful idea. But that is a part of the thinking. If you cannot maintain the existing roads, you are building more that you will not be able to maintain and sort of creating the problem.

Mr. HILL. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. KIND. I do not have any time left. So, it is up to the Chair to determine that.

Mr. HILL. I would ask consent that the gentleman have 2 additional minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Go ahead, Mr. Hill.

Mr. HILL. This point is on roads, and hopefully we will get into this later on with the additional panel members. One of the problems here is that the Forest Service, of course, appropriately points out that we have this huge backlog, $8.5 billion and a year ago it was $10 billion worth of costs to maintain the roads.

That is almost all highways in the National Forest. What the Chief testified to a year ago, is that for less than $100 million, less than $100 million, we could provide enough money to maintain all of the Forest Service roads that we are talking about here; the logging roads, the recreational access roads, which I would be willing to join with my colleagues over there, to work on.

The fact of the matter is that we do not have a problem in terms of finding the funding to do that. What we have is a problem of determining whether it is the appropriate thing to do.

Three hundred and eighty-three thousand miles of road sounds like a lot of roads, but it is not. This is a huge area. We have got 191 million acres of Federal lands. This is the public's land.

The public does not even have access to much of it. In fact, my State legislature is going to be passing a bill, I think, to require the Forest Service, when dealing with road, road maintenance, and road obliteration, that it has to meet Montana's water quality standards.

They have failed to do it. In fact, they are damaging fisheries in removing roads. It would be better to be maintaining them than to

remove them. Hopefully, later in the panel, we will be able to get to the question that you have asked.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you very much. Bart, I might just say, since we are as I guess Mr. Smith said, this primarily goes back to logging.

We were given a report yesterday that said that there is right now 23 billion board feet of growth each year in the National Forest. We have decreased, decreased, decreased, and decreased the amount of logging.

So, we are now cutting 3 billion board feet, and 6 billion board feet are dying each year. So, we are cutting half of what is dying. It is amazing.

At any rate, thank you very much for being here with us. We are going to get back to our other panel. I apologize, once again, to Congressman Marlenee, and particularly to Ms. Svoboda, to whom we were about to get.

Ms. Svoboda, you may begin your testimony.

STATEMENT OF KELITA M. SVOBODA, LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT, AMERICAN MOTORCYCLIST ASSOCIATION

Ms. SVOBODA. Thank you.

Chairman Duncan, members of this Subcommittee, my name is Kelita Svoboda. I am the Legislative Assistant for the American Motorcyclist Association.

On behalf of our association's 232,000 members, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I will summarize my written comments and ask that my entire statement be placed into the record.

The AMA is not opposed to the Forest Service taking a close look at roads in our National Forests. With an estimated 1.7 million recreation associated vehicles traveling forest roads every day, it only makes sense to work with the public to develop a long-term strategy for addressing recreation needs.

However, we strongly disagree with the way the Forest Service has approached and implemented the interim road moratorium. We would like to draw your attention to a number of our concerns.

We were extremely disappointed to learn that after a contentious 13 month period, the Forest Service will now begin its official moratorium to last an additional 18 months. The AMA finds this even more frustrating, given the fact that Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck admitted to Representative Schaefer in testimony before this Subcommittee that the agency could probably devise a long-term policy without a moratorium.

This action begs the question, if the agency admittedly does not need to have the moratorium, then why propose this policy in the first place?

Having said that, we continue to be concerned with the methods used by the Forest Service to collect data from the public and the continued use of ill-defined terms by the agency.

Open houses sponsored by the Forest Service last year were not public forums that allowed discussion among participants. Instead, many people walked into a room where they were shown a video tape of the proposal, told where to leave their written comments,

and if they did speak with a staff member, found someone who was disinterested in what they had to say.

Our Federal agencies should do a much better job of collecting public opinion. We have serious concerns over the Forest Service's inability to clearly define critical terms.

For example, depending upon one's perspective and experience, the terms road, roadless, and others can mean any number of different things. It seems impossible to receive credible and comparable comments when the Forest Service has not provided the public with a precise definition of terms.

While we appreciate the efforts of the Forest Service staff to include a new paragraph for definitions in the final rule, it fell far too short of its intention to fully clarify the interim rule.

Under the Forest Service definition, "unroaded" areas can contain unclassified roads, or routes that are more than 50 inches wide and not intended for long-term highway use. This definition also fits many ATV trails and connector trails used by off-highway motorcyclists.

The final rule is still unclear as to whether or not the moratorium applies to roads that are constructed or maintained as recreational trails, but that are not a part of the transportation system.

I can assure you that any trail is likely to be over 50 inches wide at some point along the trail. Again, the term "unroaded" could thus encompass all recreational trails as roads.

For the reasons I have outlined, the Forest Service should alter its "50 inch" definition of a "road" to simply apply to vehicles over 50 inches wide; not vehicle travel ways. This would reduce confusion and make it clear that designated recreational trails are to be excluded from the road moratorium.

Our members have established themselves within the outdoor recreation community as a responsible and environmentally friendly user group.

They provide the Forest Service and other land management agencies extensive volunteer hours for trail maintenance, graffiti removal from shared public facilities, and to ensure that all motorized recreationists obey trail rules.

We have worked with the Forest Service staff for decades on developing environmentally responsible motorized trail management. However, we have recently had a difficult time defending that relationship to our members.

We are hopeful that the agency has learned from the mistrust it created with the interim moratorium, during the development of a long-term road policy. Any long-term strategy needs to avoid placing priority upon the "aggressive decommissioning" of roads.

Not only should these decisions be made at the local level with public involvement, but the priorities should be on turning "roads" into trails. The Forest Service also needs to provide an improved forum for soliciting public input.

A true "town hall" style meeting would provide the public an opportunity to have discussions with Forest Service personnel, members of the community, and would gain greater public support.

Overall, it is incumbent upon the Forest Service to provide the same, accurate information to all forest personnel; especially those

who have contact with the public to ensure that consistent policies, procedures, and definitions are being circulated in regard to the road moratorium.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. It has been a privilege to be here today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Svoboda may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you very much. For the first questioning, I am going to yield my time to Mr. Peterson.

Mr. PETERSON. Ron, I guess I have a question for you.

If I remember your testimony correctly, it has been a little while ago. Did you sort of paint the picture that this is a lot bigger than about timber?

Mr. MARLENEE. Absolutely. This is an issue of access and recreation on public lands. It is an issue about the future of hunter recreationalists. As I have stated in my testimony, access is the biggest problem today for sportsmen.

Unless we provide access, the future of hunting is threatened. People are becoming frustrated. Instead of going hunting, they are going bowling.

We need that conservation input, conservation dollars that come from sportsmen that enhance wildlife, add to the habitat, et cetera, et cetera. It is a success story, but if they eliminate hunters through limiting access, we are cutting off our nose to spite our face.

Mr. PETERSON. But you are also limiting anybody who would want any nature experience that does not have the physical ability to be a mountain climber, hiker, or a pretty physical person. Would you agree with that?

Mr. MARLENEE. I would certainly agree with that; the elderly, the handicapped, those who are berry pickers, those who go out with families.

These are the people that use those roads. There is a factor of safety also involved here. I know of nobody that uses—very few people that use the forest, particularly in the West, who has not used an old road to reorient themselves and find their way out of the bush.

That probably is true in the Michigan and Wisconsin area where it is flatter and where these roads do provide a safety factor for those who are out in the forest.

Mr. PETERSON. I am going to paint you a parallel. You have been around awhile. You understand. The other law I am going to mention. The American Disabilities Act is an Act that was passed, I think, while your tenure was here.

It is an Act that says that private property, private buildings in our communities where many of our opponents live, have to be accessible to all; private. Here we have public land that I think we are limiting to a minute percentage of those who could ever get out there.

I am a hunter. I am not afraid to go 10 miles from a road, but I am rare. Most hunters that I know today will not go a mile from a road. They are afraid of getting lost. If it is any kind of rugged terrain at all, a mile, a mile and a half; someplace they have been.

So, you are really limiting the use. Hunters who spend a lot of time in the woods, I think hikers are the same way, but you are down to the young, the strong, and the able who are not afraid of the wild. You have a small percentage of the population. Did we buy this land just for them or did we want families?

The majority of Americans are approaching the senior citizen age. Do you want to hike 5 miles from a road if you had some kind of heart problems or health problems, though the hiking is good for you?

Are we really shutting this down from most Americans; from the ability to go out there and enjoy the nature, the recreation, and the wildlife out there, just to view it, not even to hunt, but just to view it?

Are we really not by having a huge roadless policy, that we are just saying for most of America, this is not for you? This is just for a few of us that are young, strong, and able to go out there.

Mr. MARLENEE. If I may comment, sir. Yes, we are shutting it down. Yes, we are locking a lot of people out with a roadless policy; with a policy that concentrates people on a smaller and smaller area.

So, we are going to eliminate the roads. Those that want to seek recreation, that want to hunt then are concentrated in a smaller and smaller area.

The impact is greater than if you allow them to spread out and recreate over a larger area. As this constriction of opportunity occurs, a lot more people are just going to say, hey, it is not worth it. We are not going out. But, yes, it is very true that it has a severe impact on every recreation; particularly, families and people without means.

If they have the means, they are wealthy, or else the physical means, they are out and into the roadless and wilderness areas. We must remember, and I have spent my life trying to make certain that, that auto mechanic, that person that has a weekend off to enjoy with his family, our public lands, have an opportunity and a place to go.

Mr. PETERSON. So, it is middle class, blue collar working America that does not have a lot of resources and a lot of expensive toys who would like to go out there and spend time; who is not going to take his family miles from a road.

So, we really shut-out much of America that is owned by America to those kinds of people who really—it is probably the people we created for. The wealthy have their get aways. The wealthy have their own estates. The wealthy have their own piece of the forest, quite often.

Mr. MARLENEE. Private property.

Mr. PETERSON. They have their own get away place in the mountains, in the hills, out in the vast of America. This public land that we bought for the average person, I think we are shutting out a huge percent from them ever having a chance to utilize.

I guess I just find that so conflicting where we have laws that say public property must be open to all. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. I have no questions.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right. Mr. Hill.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here. I appreciate it very much.

Ron, I have to just tell you that your organization has more credibility, the most credibility, the greatest integrity, in terms of representation of sportsmen and sports women in this Congress and in Washington, DC.

So, that is a bipartisan recognition. I hear that from the Democrat and the Republican members. Your organization provides the leadership in the sportsmen caucus, for conservation, habitat conservation, and also for constructive proposals to deal with endangered species on an international, as well as the national level.

So, I just want to put that on the record. Your organization represents some people who can afford to hire the expensive outfitter. But your organization also represents the guy that wants to go hunting on the weekend.

That is one of the reasons that I have great regard for your organization. One of the most troubling things in your testimony, and I am going to read it to you.

I know you know that it is in here. "The agenda of lock-out is not new. I recall, approximately 15 years ago a coalition of privileged users set down on paper the goals and agenda they wanted to achieve on public lands.

(1) eliminate timber harvest;
(2) eliminate as many roads as possible;
(3) eliminate all mechanical motorized use;
(4) secure all of the wilderness possible;
(5) eliminate horses;
(6) eliminate hunting; and
(7) establish limits of human intrusion.

Then you go on to evidence the fact that five of those seven are already in some level of achievement. You know the situation in Montana. We are fighting on every one of those fronts right now.

There are efforts to ration access to the public lands. There are efforts to put restrictions on horse access; not just on motorized vehicles, but even horses. Do you honestly believe that the goal here is to ultimately lock the forests up for recreationalists; particularly, hunting and fishing?

Mr. MARLENEE. I think that would be an insidious ulterior motive. I do not believe that the professionals within the Forest Service, those on the ground, those up in the regional forests, the local Forest Service manager. I do not think that, that is really underlying their intent.

We have a lot of dedicated people, as you know, that are a part of the community, that are a part of the recreationalists. However, the policies that are put forth and the mandates that are put out of Washington do not take that local input into consideration.

So, that is why I said in here that locals who dare to speak out and professionals are speaking out against it. Those who do not have courage enough are privately saying how they resent the direction that the Forest Service is going from the mandates from Washington.

It is unfortunate. I think the policy can be changed. When I listed the seven, our laws that the United States Congress passed have contributed to some achievement of the seven listed.

The Forest Service, themselves, depending on the Chief and the policy put forth by the Department of Agriculture, the person who heads up the Forest Service Division or the Secretary himself, have helped to achieve to some degree almost every one of those seven limitations listed.

The elimination of timber harvest, Chief Dombeck, himself, has said 70 percent. That is a heck of a hit on a community, or on a state, or on our national economy, on the national treasury.

Eliminate as many roads as possible. That has been ongoing. I need to emphasize that. That has been ongoing with a galloping force in Montana. I think when Senator Burns inquired, there were over 160 barriers and traps put up on public land roads in one forest, Gallatin. This took place over the past 10 years.

[Voice activation mike started fading in and out on this witness only.]

Then in addition to that, I am told there were around 400 miles of roads closed in Lemhi Forest in Idaho. The Forest Service needs to be forthright before they do any more closure of access. Tell the Subcommittee how many miles in the last 10 years that have been closed.

Mr. HILL. You know, we have a road in the Flathead Forest that they obliterated last year. They removed, I think, 20-something culverts. Some of those cuts were 20, 30 feet deep; a tremendous sedimentation problem to the streams.

This was a trail that was completely grown over with grass and even had trees, full-size trees growing. It was not a road. It was simply a trail that sportsmen used. They could not use it for motorized vehicles.

It caused great damage to extremely critical bull trout habitat. It could not have ever met the standards that a logging company would be held to if it was going to construct a road. That is the kind of thing that we are experiencing.

I want to stay with the hunting point because I think it is extremely important. Forest management requires some timber harvest; does it not? I mean, in terms of maintaining a healthy forest, you have to have access to it.

Timber harvest is a part of maintaining a healthy forest and healthy habitat for game animals: elk and deer populations. Would you agree with that; comment on that?

Mr. MARLENEE. [Voice activation mike is fading in and out on this witness only.] Prior to ever building a road, prior to ever constructing a road, the Forest Service is required to evaluate the sensitivity—to make certain there is no erosion, to make certain that, that road does not impact the breeding ground, habitat, camping grounds, or create environmental damage every time they build a road.

Now, they are saying maybe our evaluation is wrong. We ought to close all of those up and—maintain—reclaim those old roads that have reclaimed themselves. I do not think—everyone who has been out in the forest has come upon an old road that has timber on it, grass on it, and it is stabilized. I would suggest to go in and disrupt all of that under the guise of reclaiming that road is not only a waste of money, but may actually provide more environmental damage——

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Congressman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Hill. Mr. Kind.

Mr. KIND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Marlenee, welcome back. We appreciate your testimony and your presence here today.

I just want to see if we can clarify this debate. I know Mr. Peterson was talking about a lot of the recreational users, the weekend campers, and what not, gaining access to the roads, and further access to the public lands.

I believe that only 20 percent of the already existing roads in our National Forest is for recreational use. By and large the vast majority of the roads that are in existence are for high clearance vehicles. Does that sound about right to you?

Mr. MARLENEE. No, nearly every road on the forest is used for recreation.

Mr. KIND. The point I am just trying to make is that I have not seen a lot of Winabagos or campers trodding across the National Forest roads that are already in existence. There is some limited access, yes.

By and large the vast majority of the roads are for high clearance vehicles and perhaps for some recreational use for hunting, hiking, and that type of purposes. As far as the actual recreational camper going out on the weekend, what we are talking about here really is not having too much of an impact on them.

I think what the debate is all about is creating more roads mainly for private timber access with timber industry, and, you know, that is fine.

There has to be a forest management policy. Again, it comes down to dollars and cents. I am troubled by the fact that only 18 percent of the existing roads right now fall under the safety and environmental standards that were established.

There is a lot of work to be done there. Also, who is going to pay for that? It is a tough sell for my taxpayers back in Western Wisconsin that we should be creating new roads in the National Forest lands mainly to be used for private timber interests.

I think that is just the fundamental debate that we are going to continue to have here in these halls for some time to come. Also, given the fact that we have got 383,000 miles of roads right now already existing in our National Forest lands.

You can go around the globe 15 times. I do not think it is all that unreasonable just to step back, take a breath, and see where we are going as far as the creation of new roads and how they are going to be maintained and who is going to pay for it.

I am a hunter. I like to get out and hunt. I know how valuable it is to gain access to public lands. I grew up in a hunting family. You have a very valid point.

The question I want to pose to you is, are there any studies or any data that we can point to that shows a serious concern in regard to this moratorium over species pressure, over population, and what that might do to hurt management, for instance?

Mr. MARLENEE. Most recreation is not done with a camper, Winabago or otherwise. Most sportsmen and a majority of recreationists prefer primitive roads, not all-weather through

parks. The contention by the Forest Service that they must maintain these roads to a high degree of safety and ease of travel is bogus. Perhaps they want to elevate costs.

We are not necessarily addressing the moratorium. We are not addressing the issue of building new roads. We are addressing our concern that there be no access loss.

Mr. KIND. I have not had a chance to inquire on the State level as far as the State agencies. Are you aware of any State agencies right now that are conducting some studies on the impact that the moratorium may have on herd management or species pressure in the public lands?

Mr. MARLENEE. [Voice activation mike fading in and out on this witness only.]

Mr. KIND. You are just not aware of any.

Mr. PETERSON. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. KIND. Sure. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. PETERSON. I cannot name a study, but I was in State government for 19 years. It was an ongoing problem to get the deer heard trimmed on the Allegheny National Forest because hunters will not hunt very far from a road today. They are just not comfortable out that far.

So, it was an ongoing problem of how we get the hunters in where the deer population is too heavy and where the deer population us having a damaging effect on the environment because there are too many of them; regeneration of species and so forth.

So, it was a problem most of the time I was in State government. We could not get the hunters to get out there. There is not access to the forest. You have to go a long ways from a road to hunt there. You are in rough terrain and hunters are afraid of it.

Mr. KIND. I am reclaiming my time.

I appreciate your comments because we have experienced similar problems in the State of Wisconsin with regard to herd management and what not, but who knows.

Now, with the cutting edge technology that we see today, Mr. Chairman, with satellites and location finders, maybe we hunters will have the technology and the confidence to venture a little further from the road than they have had in the past.

Thank you. That is all I have.

Mr. HILL. Would the gentleman yield for just a moment?

Mr. KIND. Sure.

Mr. HILL. If you would, I think it is important to note that I think the Forest Service has indicated that 93 percent of the use of the forest roads is for other than timber harvest.

About 7 percent of the use of these roads is for timber harvest. The rest of it is for recreational use, for fire protection use, for maintaining the health of the forest.

There is kind of a view out there that the construction of these roads is some sort of a subsidy for the purpose of protecting the timber companies.

That is simply not true. In fact, we eliminated the Road Credit Program, you may recall, in the Omnibus bill last year to eliminate any semblance of any kind of subsidy for the construction of the roads.

The point is, in fact the Forest Service in announcing this moratorium has indicated that the deterioration of these roads is substantially a consequence of increased recreational use; not increased timber company use, but increased recreational use.

That is the issue that we are kind of talking about here. Thank you for yielding.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Kind.

You know, I think it was Mr. Hill who mentioned earlier the 191 million acres that the Forest Service controls. I am not sure if some people really realize how much land that is.

The Great Smokey Mountains National Park, most of which is in my District, is 565,000 acres. So, what we are talking about here is more than 300 Great Smokey Mountain National Parks all put together.

That does not count the land that the BLM has. That does not count the land that the National Park Service has. In fact, I read recently that the Federal Government now owns over 30 percent of the land in this country.

State and local governments and quasi-governmental units own another 20 percent. There was an interesting column on this in the Washington Times just a couple of days ago. This is by Joseph Perkins, a columnist for the San Diego Union Tribune.

"Of all of the land in the United States, less than 5 percent, repeat, less than 5 percent, has been developed. Indeed, according to a recent study by Samuel Staley for the Reason Public Policy Institutes.

Seventy-five percent of the U.S. population, some 200 million men, women, and children live on just 3.5 percent of the country's land area.

Moreover, Mr. Staley notes in more than 3/4 of the States, including California, more than 90 percent of the land is devoted to rural uses, including parks, wildlife preservation, forests, and pasture."

I just think those are some pretty interesting statistics there. Mr. Marlenee, you said that there has not been much public input. You made reference to that. I would like to ask Ms. Svoboda about that.

Has your group and other groups such as yours been included or consulted? Has there been much public participation? I know there has been some kind of focus groups, but I would just like to hear your comments on that.

Ms. SVOBODA. Yes, we have been involved. We were involved certainly with the interim road moratorium in the comments that we provided to the Forest Service, to this Subcommittee and to a number of different areas.

In regard to the focus groups, those are what the Forest Service is trying to do to gain public input on their long-term road strategy. We do have some minor concerns about that.

We are thankful that we have been invited. Our association has been invited to attend two of those focus group meetings; one in California and one in Georgia that is going on this week.

Our concern is not so much that the Forest Service is trying to do these focus groups, which will allow a small group of people to get together including recreationists, conservationists, and industry folks at more or less an equal level. But we want to make sure that

before they provide any long-term strategy, that there is appropriate and adequate public comment from all users, not just the select few interest groups that the Forest Service has invited to attend.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Marlenee, any comments on that?

Mr. MARLENEE. The participation basically came about when they developed the Forest Service plan that Mr. Stupak alluded to in his testimony.

So, the Forest Service took comments at that time. Agreements were reached. With regard to the new moratorium, Congressman Peterson tried to address that, but I know of little, if any, public input that took place with regard to the rehabilitation, closure, et cetera of roads.

With regard to the road closures that have already taken place, the hundreds and hundreds of miles of public land access that has been closed, there has been some hearings, but they have been very, very limited in access to those hearings by those who use those roads.

It is sometimes virtually impossible. The Forest Service needs to do a better job of seeing what the local people, the impact on the local sportsmen and recreational users, will be.

Mr. DUNCAN. You know, there is so much interest in these types of things. I mean, this is not the first time roads have been closed. I remember in 1995, I also have in my District much of the Cherokee National Forest.

By the way, there was an article in the Knoxville paper a few weeks ago which said that Tennessee has a total land area, and Tennessee is a pretty big State, when you go all the way across.

It has a total land area of 26 million acres and that half of it is in forest. Then in really every State, the amount of forest land, the number of trees has gone way up in the last 50 years.

Yet, I bet if you go to almost any elementary school in this country and ask the young people has the number of trees gone up in the last 50 years or gone down? They would probably all say it has gone down because there has been such distortion and propaganda, false propaganda, out there on some of these issues.

I remember in 1995, the Forest Service was about to close some roads leading to cemeteries and roads that hunters had used. I held a town meeting about that and it was on very short notice.

It was at not a particularly good time. We had to do it at 6 p.m. one night. Over 600 people turned out. It shocked me. I mean, you just do not get that many people coming out for that type of thing.

I know the briefing paper we have said that the Forest Service has said that they have 1.7 million vehicles per day on these roads.

[The Hearing Briefing Paper referred to follows:]

BRIEFING PAPER

SUMMARY

The purpose of this hearing is to review the Forest Service's progress in developing a long-term road management policy, initiated in January, 1998, and the agency's 18-month moratorium on construction and reconstruction of roads in roadless areas. The moratorium was first announced in January, 1998 (concurrent with the proposal to develop a new long-term road policy), and a "final interim rule" was published Feb. 11, 1999, taking effect March 1, 1999.

BACKGROUND

On January 28, 1998, the Forest Service published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to revise the regulations concerning the management of the National Forest System transportation system (Federal Register Vol. 63, Number 18). The Forest Service stated at the time that the inventoried road system includes an estimated 373,000 miles of forest roads that provide access for recreation use (1.7 million vehicles per day); agency administrative use (9,000 vehicles daily); and resource development (15,000 vehicles per day). The agency also estimated there are 60,000 miles of non-system (or "unclassified") roads that are not managed or maintained by the agency. When the interim rule was published in February 1999, the agency revised its estimate of the inventoried road system to 383,000 miles, and it reduced the amount of unclassified roads to 52,000 miles.

In recent years recreation use has increased and resource development use has decreased significantly. In the past, resource commodity users performed a large amount of the road maintenance, concurrent with their use. With the reduced level of commercial use, and consequently less road maintenance performed by the users, the Forest Service has had insufficient funds to maintain the road system on its own. As a result, the Forest Service estimated last year that only 40 percent of the inventoried roads are fully maintained to the planned safety and environmental standards for which they were designed. The agency estimates its backlog of road maintenance and reconstruction needs is at least $8.5 billion.

ANALYSIS

The National Forest System covers 192 million acres of land. Within this land base, 35 million acres are designated as wilderness, and an additional 6 million acres are designated as proposed wilderness in the current forest plans. No road building may occur on these lands, even without the agency's 18-month moratorium.

Another 33 million acres of National Forest land is unroaded in blocks of 5,000 acres or more, for which current forest plan direction proposes management that could include building roads. The interim rule prohibits any road construction on these lands and on blocks of roadless land 1,000 acres or more in size that are adjacent to inventoried roadless areas, wild segments of the Wild and Scenic River System, wilderness areas, or other Federal roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more. The Forest Service has not estimated the total number of acres affected by the moratorium.

The agency did complete an assessment of the impacts of its road moratorium. However, it estimated impacts based only on planned activities that must be canceled as a result of the moratorium. It did *not* estimate the effect of deferring any other activities that require road access which could not occur over the next 18 months, nor did it account for delays in planning those activities if they are eventually allowed to occur. Thus, many believe the impact assessment significantly underestimates the real impact of the moratorium.

Finally, the agency announced more than thirteen months ago that the proposed moratorium would last 18 months or until the long term road management policy was completed, whichever was sooner. Although over a year has elapsed for work on the long-term policy, the 18-month clock for the moratorium has just begun, with adoption of the interim rule last month.

WITNESSES: A witness list is attached.

STAFF CONTACT: Anne Heissenbuttel, Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, extension 5-0691.

Mr. DUNCAN. Do you have any rough guess as to how many millions of recreational users there are in these National Forest? I am not a hunter. I do not even know how many millions of people might be hunters. You are talking about an awful lot of people; are you not?

Mr. MARLENEE. Mr. Chairman, I think the Forest Service does have those figures and can provide them. I know I have seen them in the past; how many recreational days of forest use there are.

So, I think that figure is already compiled. One last thing, if I might, that I would like to bring to your attention.

Mr. DUNCAN. Sure.

Mr. MARLENEE. I have secured a rumor from two sources, reliable sources, that the Forest Service is trying out a new policy, if

trying out is the right word, where public lands, and this may be other public lands also, where public lands are closed, unless there is a notice posted that they are otherwise open.

I would, if I may suggest, Mr. Chairman, I think we deserve to know if the Forest Service is in fact moving in that direction. It is an insidious, insidious direction for them to take. To just say all public lands are closed, unless they are posted open. I find that alarming. I hope that that can be put to rest.

Are they doing it? Yes or no? We do not know. But I do have rumor from a couple of sources that, that is the case.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, as Mr. Peterson said, we need to make sure that public lands remain public lands and are not limited just to Federal Government bureaucrats, or the rich elitist, or environmental extremists.

It is becoming a very, very serious and controversial issue in this country. I have been filling in for Mrs. Chenoweth, who became ill. I have got to go to another meeting.

Mr. Peterson, can you take over from here? Well, go ahead and call on Mr. Udall for any comments or questions at this time.

Mr. UDALL OF COLORADO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Panel, thank you for being here with us today. I missed some of the initial presentations you made. I look forward to reading over the materials that you have shared with us.

I just want to make a couple of comments. Unfortunately, Congressman Marlenee knows that I have got another meeting that I have got to go off to. So, I am not going to be able to have a chance to hear the Forest Service panel.

I do think my colleague, Mr. Kind, raised some important questions and points, particularly on what we are doing on the backs of our taxpayers. I know in Colorado, in my District, I hear general support for the moratorium, with the understanding that it includes the building of new roads.

That existing roads are maintained in an opened fashion right now until we get our hands around this particular situation. I think that makes some pretty good sense.

With regards to the rumor about the closure of public lands, I think in some cases that may make sense, particularly where we are getting new roads created without the studies that you have referenced and without the environmental impact overview.

It is the other roads that are being created by use as opposed to by decision that this is a good place to put a road. So, I hope the Forest Service panel will address some of these questions, particularly this creation of new roads through unauthorized, off-road use.

I would also point out that in our area where we had forest plans in place, the Arapaho Roosevelt forest, which is a part of my District, that plan actually supersedes the moratorium because that plan has been put in place.

So, I think there has been some flexibility applied. I think we ought to move ahead and see where this all leads us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETERSON. [presiding] We want to thank both of our panelists for their fine testimony and their willingness to take questions today. Thank you both very much.

Mr. MARLENEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. SVOBODA. Thank you.

Mr. PETERSON. As they are departing, we will ask Ron Stewart the Deputy Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, accompanied by Mr. Tom Mills, Director of the Pacific Northwest Research Station, to come to the table.

We welcome you. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

STATEMENT OF RON STEWART, DEPUTY CHIEF, U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Mr. STEWART. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. I really am pleased to be here this morning to discuss the status of the Forest Service Revised Road Policy.

As you indicated, I am Ron Stewart. I am the Deputy Chief for Programs and Legislation for the Forest Service. I am accompanied this morning by Dr. Tom Mills who is Director of the Pacific Northwest Research Station.

I also brought with me Rhey Solomon from the Ecosystem Management Staff; Bill Timko from the Forest Management Staff; and John Bell from the Engineering Staff; all of the Forest Service.

We are available to answer specific technical questions to try to make this as most useful to all of you as possible. With your permission, I would like to summarize my testimony and submit the full testimony for the record.

I would like to start with three key points. Then, with your permission, I would like to elaborate on those. That is that the first point is the Forest Service road system is essential to rural communities for public purposes and for necessary management activities.

I think our previous panel certainly indicated the importance of that road system. The second point is that the existing system was designed to meet yesterday's needs.

Finally, a comprehensive look at the transportation system in light of today's science and tomorrow's needs is absolutely critical.

To expand on the first point that this road system is essential to rural communities, for public purposes, and for necessary management activities, I would like to say that forest roads have become an essential part of the transportation in many rural parts of the country.

They help to meet recreational demands, while providing economic opportunities by facilitating the removal of commodities from the National Forest. The benefits of forest roads are many.

Also, we must recognize that roads create many ecological impacts on our watersheds. As emphasized, in the Forest Service natural resource agenda, we need to maintain a road system to provide public access, while reducing and reversing the environmental impacts.

The revised road policy is an essential part in implementing that agenda. The second point, that is the existing system was designed to meet yesterday's needs.

I think it is important to recognize that the current road system was developed to meet the transportation needs of the 1960s and 1970s.

It does not reflect the needs of today. For example, timber hauling has decreased over time, while recreation traffic has grown dramatically. Today, there are about 1.7 million recreation vehicles per

day on Forest Service roads, and only about 15,000 timber harvest vehicles per day.

Timber-related traffic has dropped to about 1950 levels, and represents less than 1 percent of all forest road use. It is literally true that yesterday's logging trucks have been replaced with today's mail trucks, school buses, and family station wagons.

The current road managed system represents a significant long-term financial commitment. As long as a road exist, it must be maintained. The National Forest road system has 383,000 miles of classified roads, and about 52,000 miles of unclassified roads.

Classified roads are those roads that were constructed or maintained for long-term highway vehicle use. Unclassified roads, in contrast, are temporary roads or short-term roads that are associated with fire suppression, timber harvest, oil, gas, or mineral activities, as well as travel ways resulting from off-road vehicle use.

In the past, most of the reconstruction and construction work of our road system was accomplished by purchasers of National Forest timber.

For example, in 1996, planned construction was 38 miles from appropriated funds, and 441 from timber purchasers. This ratio varies from year-to-year.

For both reconstruction and construction, work done by timber purchasers far exceeds the work done by appropriated funds. Even if harvest levels significantly increased from their current levels in the future, it would not begin to address the maintenance and the construction needs on the 383,000 miles.

From 1990 to 1998, the Forest Service has closed 17,715 miles of road. But more importantly, over 9,000 miles of road have been converted from high standard roads, designed for passenger car traffic, to low standard roads maintained for high clearance vehicles, such as pick-up trucks.

While the focus of discussion, so far, has been on the one time suspension of 368 miles of roads that we will delay or not construct during the suspension period, primary access to our National Forest by passengers is being reduced by about 1,000 miles per year.

Based on information we are preparing for a report to Congress on Forest Service maintenance and improvement needs, we have a deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs backlog of about $8.4 billion and it is growing.

Currently, we receive funding for about 18 percent of the need annually to maintain roads to plan service, safety, and environmental standards. Even with the significant increase in our budget request for fiscal year 2000, funding does not address the annual maintenance needs or begin to address the backlog. It is fiscally and environmentally irresponsible to continue to build roads, when our current road system is in such disrepair and decline.

Without adequate funding, the system will continue to decline, causing environmental damage and posing human safety risks. Finally, a comprehensive look at our transportation system is needed in light of today's science and tomorrow's needs.

To accomplish our objective, we are following a three-step process. That includes the temporary suspension that was discussed, and has been most of the focus of energy so far.

We also are working on road analysis procedure. That will include a new science-based multi-scale landscape analysis. It will include a process to help land managers make informed land management decisions about the management of roads.

It will provide an expansion and extension of previous road analysis tools and techniques. During the last 12 months, the Forest Service has field tested this draft procedure on six National Forests.

It is now undergoing a rigorous scientific peer and technical review. We expect to have that road analysis procedure available during this fiscal year. The third step in our policy is to develop revised regulations and direction. The Forest Service is developing new regulations and direction to provide an environmentally sound road system that meets the needs of local people.

These will update current road regulations and directions to provide the minimum forest road system that best serves the management objectives and public uses of National Forest and grasslands.

It will ensure that the road system provides for safe public use, environmentally affordable and efficient management, and is environmentally sound.

It will ensure that road management decisions use a science-based analysis process to fully evaluate benefits and impacts of road systems within both unroaded and already roaded portions of the landscape.

Finally, that it ensures that new construction does not compromise socially and ecologically important values of unroaded areas.

In summary, while the focus of the debate continues to be on the temporary suspension, delaying or eliminating construction of 368 miles of new roads in roadless areas over the next 18 months, we must not lose sight of the larger picture.

Over that same 18 month period, approximately 1,300 miles of roads will become inaccessible to passenger vehicles because we cannot provide proper maintenance and assure public safety. This is the real access issue. To get on top of this issue, we first need a comprehensive, scientifically-based, consistent frame work for analyzing our transportation system needs, and deciding when, where, and how we will build roads in the future.

Second, we need to apply this frame work to decision making. The actual decision on when, where, how to build, or decommission roads will continue to be made with public involvement at the local level, and usually through the forest land and resource management planning process.

Finally, we need to find ways to adequately fund and reduce our enormous backlog in deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs.

This concludes my statement. We would be happy to answer any questions that you or members of the Subcommittee may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stewart may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you, Mr. Stewart.

Of the 383,000 miles of road in the system, what percentage of those are used by a lot of people like hunters, fishermen, campers, hikers, bird watchers?

Mr. STEWART. This seems to be another example, Mr. Chairman, of the 80/20 rule. About 20 percent of that road system has about 80 percent of the use. That is generally what we consider to be our primary, I want to say it is the arterial collector road system.

Mr. PETERSON. So, 76,000 or 77,000 miles of the roads are the ones that have pretty much become community roads that the community uses.

Mr. STEWART. They are a vital part.

Mr. PETERSON. Township people, local people, local folks. Okay. What percentage of your backlog is on those roads? Are they not the most costly ones?

I know townships are always in trouble with their improved roads. They are not in trouble fixing a dirt road, putting in new pipes, and getting the ditched cleaned. It is their more improved roads where all of their costs are.

Mr. STEWART. We have that number. We are digging it out, with your patience.

Mr. PETERSON. What percentage of your backlog is bridges?

Mr. STEWART. This is John Bell from our Engineering Staff. He has got the facts and figures on our road systems. So, it would be more useful, rather than for him to feed me information, for him to go ahead and discuss this with you.

Mr. BELL. I have so many facts and figures that it is hard to put a finger on an exact box immediately, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETERSON. Okay. You heard my question.

Mr. BELL. Yes, I did. Our passenger car maintenance roads, maintenance levels 3, 4, and 5; the simple answer is it is about half the backlog is on them. It is slightly more.

Mr. PETERSON. Because it is the most improved roads you have and it is the most costly to fix.

Mr. BELL. They were the most expensive roads to construct initially and require the most maintenance. On your separate question on bridges, out of the 8.3 billion, the bridge program's backlog is about 100, make it about $200 million. So, it is 2.5 to 3 percent of the total backlog.

Mr. PETERSON. I am going to share with you my thoughts. If you agree with me, fine. If you do not, fine. I think you are in a no-win position. Since I have been here, which is a short time, there is huge resistance towards your roads.

I mean, the same people who want these roadless areas, want no roads, also do not want your current roads to be fixed. I mean, they are the same people who are trying to cut your road budget. Because it is all, I guess, figured to be that if we do not have roads in the forests, we cannot cut timber, and we will get our ultimate goal, or whatever that is, or we will not have people out there.

How do we ever get out of this problem of having roads that accommodate our communities that you are in for school buses, general recreationalists, and so forth, and how do we have a budget to do that, if the same people, the same groups that are very successful, stop us from spending money on roads period?

Then we allow the roads to deteriorate, and they become an environmental hazard. I have heard that today a number of times, environmental hazard, because we have not fixed them. But we will

not appropriate the money to fix them because you might do something with them that we do not want done.

So, how do you win?

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Chairman, if I could take a shot at that. I have put a fair amount of thought into that question. Certainly, the Forest Service Roads Program has been very controversial in Congress.

As you know, we almost lost the entire program over the last couple of Congresses. It is always going to be a matter of great debate. A part of what we are trying to do is shift that debate. That is a part of the reason or focus of my testimony this morning.

While everybody is kind of focused in on this interim policy that affects 3 or 4 percent of the entire road construction during this next 18 months, we are ignoring what is going on, on the 383,000 miles, which is where a lot of the real issue in the long-term rest.

My question is how do we address that? A part of it is I think understanding what the problem is. Until recently, as recently as January, we have not had a good handle on what the problem is.

We have had a lot of estimates of the construction, reconstruction, and maintenance backlog needs. But they have not been the sort of thing that anybody would have wanted to lay their life on the line to defend because frankly they were just that. They were estimates.

At the request of Congress, we had to take a good look at our infrastructure needs. That report is—I do not know if it has actually gone forward to Congress yet, but it will soon.

That is where this $8.4 billion comes from. It kind of reminds me of that story about the little dog chasing the truck. What is it going to do when it catches up with it? Now that we have got the number and it is out on the table, I think it is the number that was scaring us all.

That once it is identified, now it is an issue of how we all deal with it. I think a part of that answer is going to be this long-term transportation analysis process that does not make any decisions nationally itself. That will still be done through the forest planning process.

We will provide a consistent way of deciding how we are going to deal with that road system and focus our energy then on the highest priority needs for construction, reconstruction, and then decommissioning.

So, I think that the answer is first understanding the problem; having a process for prioritizing it. I think that our long-term policy will do that. Once we have done that, to work with you all and our partners to find ways to fund the road needs.

Some of that is going to be converting them to trails. There are, often times, willing partners to maintain those trails, as opposed to trying to maintain an entire road system.

Mr. PETERSON. That is really what a lot of them are today. The people who talked this morning of roads with trees growing in the middle of them. That is a trail. That is not a road.

Mr. STEWART. Exactly.

Mr. PETERSON. The road system that has become a part of the community ought to be separated. They are used by school buses and they are used generally by the community that lives there and

the people who come to visit ought to be separated into a certain standard of road and maybe get it out of this controversy. You have opponents of spending a dime on your roads.

It is not well-thought out, but it is out there. They are effective. They are powerful. They are winning. They have been winning since I have been here.

Mr. STEWART. One of the things that we have been looking at is the Forest Service has never declared its roads to be public roads. I do not know what the history of that is, but we never have for one reason or another.

That has not allowed us to be competitive for the highway trust funds. One of the things would be to declare those parts that are a part of those arterial collector roads would be to declare those to be public roads.

Thereby make them available for the trust fund monies. That is certainly something that we want to consider and discuss with Congress during future amendments or dealing with the next T or whatever it is called in the future. We certainly see that as one possibility for dealing with those heavily used sort of essential local roads.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Bell, would you submit the data you have with you for the record?

Mr. BELL. Mr. Chairman, if it would be easier, it will be a part of the report. What I have, well, yes we can submit it, but it——

Mr. PETERSON. It will not make much sense?

Mr. BELL. Well, it is just a spreadsheet with a lot of numbers that require a 30 page protocol of definitions.

Mr. PETERSON. Okay.

Mr. BELL. The report that Mr. Stewart mentioned is on total deferred maintenance backlog. It was required by Committee language in our appropriations bill. It includes the other infrastructure, not just the roads.

There is a summary of that information available to you already, as a special emphasis item that was a part of our fiscal year 2000 budget justification. It is already on the Hill.

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you.

Mr. STEWART. If that would be useful, we can provide that immediately.

Mr. PETERSON. Yes, that would be fine.

[The information referred to may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. PETERSON. The gentleman from Washington, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. I want to let Mr. Kind go first.

Mr. PETERSON. The gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Kind.

Mr. KIND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank my friend from Washington for letting me bump ahead of him. I thank Mr. Stewart and the rest of your group for coming here and testifying today.

I just want to clarify one thing in regards to the availability of public comment or information from anyone who is interested on this moratorium before you announce it. I imagine under any rulemaking procedure, there is a period of public comment and hearings, public hearings, that are held.

Did you also have a Web site that was available, e-mail access, and other modes of being able to communicate to you before the actual announcement? Could you clarify that for the record?

Mr. STEWART. I would be glad to. In fact, I will ask Ray Solomon who was intimately involved in that process to come up and fill in some details.

In general, it involved town hall kinds of meetings. It involved a Web site. It involved some briefings on the Hill. It also had an open comment period.

During that period, we received something like 53,000 comments that needed to be analyzed before we issued the final decision.

I will also say that as we go through the process for the long-term policy, we will go through a similar effort. That is beginning, as was mentioned earlier, with some focus groups to sort of define what some of the issues are that need to be addressed in that longer term policy.

That will include public comment and other opportunities for the public to provide input to it.

Mr. KIND. I guess at least for my satisfaction, we do not need to go into too much of the detail, but it is safe to assume that if someone is interested in this topic, and that they have access, and can submit their opinions and comments during the course of not only the announcement regarding the moratorium, but in future policy changes.

Mr. SOLOMON. That is correct. During the initial comment period on the interim, of course, at some point we had to close off the comments that we considered during the interim.

We have maintained an e-mail site, as well as a Web Page. People who are commenting and who continue to comment, we have taken those comments and added them to the long-term comment record. So, that record is continually being built and will be input or analyzed as a part of the long-term policy.

Mr. KIND. Let me ask you an unrelated subject now. Based on your past experience involving this issue, especially road building in National Forest lands; the great controversy that we have right now and the brouhaha, I think, the reason why we are having a hearing today.

In your opinion, is it more out of a concern about recreational access to these public lands or is it timber access?

Mr. STEWART. I will speak from my personal experience, which I think is most useful and probably illustrative of the issue. I was Regional Forester in California. Certainly, most of the concern about accessing unroaded areas was over timber harvest.

Of course, a lot of that had associated road activity. From a practical standpoint, once you decide to build the road, it does change the character of a roadless area. So, therefore, it has consequences that need to be carefully considered.

So, I would say most of the controversy I was familiar with was related to the timber program, but it was hard to separate that from the associated road building which had impacts beyond a particular timber sale.

Mr. KIND. We have heard testimony today in regards to roughly 52,000 miles of unauthorized roads for off-road recreation. How big a problem does that pose as far as your Administration and man-

agement of these public lands in regards to safety and environmental concerns?

Mr. STEWART. The 52,000 miles of unclassified roads includes a component that is, say, off-road vehicle use where no road was designed, but somebody has headed off country and others have followed.

The majority of that, I would say are roads that were put in for temporary access for specific things. It might be for a fire. It might have been for a timber sale or something like that.

In fact, I do not know if we have a figure of the percentage of the maintenance issues that would be on those. Many of those in the long-term probably will end up being put to bed.

They were intended to be temporary roads, not permanent roads. However, an analysis of the long-term transportation system may convert some of them to be permanent.

Mr. KIND. Okay, thank you. Thank you again for your presence and testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETERSON. The gentleman from Montana, Mr. Hill.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the panelists for being here. I am a little confused a little bit about the terms that are being used for roads here. I just kind of want to go through this.

In the past, the Forest Service has identified the 366,000 miles of roads, which I believe you are now calling classified roads, as roads that were constructed to standards. Is there some change here now? Then you go on to say unclassified roads, the 52,000 miles of roads that you used to refer to as ghost roads. Am I correct in that?

Mr. STEWART. Some of those were so-called ghost roads, yes, in that 52,000 miles.

Mr. HILL. What happened to the rest of the ghost roads then? If before you said there were 52,000 miles of ghost roads, there originally were not 52,000 miles of ghost roads?

Mr. STEWART. The numbers that we were originally using were estimates based on the experience in one region which were extrapolated nationally. In fact, we ended up doing actually a national sample. Those numbers did get adjusted.

Mr. HILL. Let me ask about that because my time is limited here. The point I want to get at here is that you have classified these 52,000 miles of roads as ghost roads, trails that were created kind of by accident.

You are now saying that some of those were purposely constructed, either for timber sales, for fire suppression, or other purposes. Is that correct?

Mr. STEWART. Certainly in that unclassified 52,000——

Mr. HILL. What portion of the 52,000 miles of roads were constructed for purpose and what portion of the 52,000 miles were created by accident, so to speak, by people not authorized to use them? What is the final breakout of that?

Mr. STEWART. In fact, we do not have an estimate by the type of road or the purpose of the road. In other words, whether it was temporary access for timber, or whether it was for fire purposes.

Mr. HILL. So, the 52,000 miles of roads now that were previously referred to as ghost roads now do include both categories.

Mr. STEWART. Yes, they did.

Mr. HILL. But the 366,000 miles of roads, which are now called classified roads, are now defined as those constructed to maintain long-term highway vehicle use. Is that correct?

Mr. STEWART. That is correct; and at least 50 inches wide.

Mr. HILL. Now, we have added another new term in the rulemaking. That is an unroaded area. That is not a roadless area. Is that correct? A non-roaded and a roadless area are not the same definition. Is that correct?

Mr. STEWART. That is correct.

Mr. HILL. A roadless area would be an area that could have included an unclassified road. Is that correct? I mean, it could not have included an unclassified road. Is that correct?

So, we have, in essence, expanded the definition with kind of a twist here that the unroaded area will be substantially larger than the previous roadless area. Is that correct?

Mr. STEWART. Yes, it will.

Mr. HILL. That concerns me some because obviously what you are doing here is you are having focus groups in an effort to try to determine how you are going to influence public opinion on this subject.

By just slightly changing that definition, because a roadless area is something that has been defined in the West. We have developed management plans around that term. We understand what it means.

We understand what it means in terms of management of the forests. Now, introducing this new term called unroaded area, we are going to confuse the public, I am sure; probably purposely.

Let me ask you something about these focus groups. You are holding focus groups. Will you provide for the Subcommittee the names of the individuals and the groups that will be participating in these focus groups?

Mr. MILLS. Yes, we will.

Mr. HILL. Will you provide those to this Subcommittee within the next week?

Mr. MILLS. Yes, we will, if they have been selected by the contractors. In some of those focus groups——

Mr. HILL. To the extent that they have been identified by the contractors, you will provide the names and the names of the groups?

Mr. MILLS. Yes, we will.

[The list of focus groups referred to may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Will you also provide to the Subcommittee the questions that will be asked to the focus group members so that we can have some sense of what the purpose of those focus groups are?

To the extent that those are not currently designated, will you provide to the Subcommittee within, let us say, 10 days of when you do that, the names of the individuals and the groups that they represent?

Mr. MILLS. Yes, we will.

[The focus group questions referred to may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Okay. Thank you very much.

Let me go on, if I could. In essence, we have had, what, 13 months since the announcement of the proposed rule on the roadless areas. We are adding another 18 months.

I think that Chief Dombeck indicated to us in his testimony a year ago that 18 months would be a sufficient period of time to do an analysis of the current road transportation management plan, in order to make recommendations either to the Congress or to make changes.

Now, we are adding another 18 months, in essence to that process. Was Mr. Dombeck wrong when he said he could do it in 18 months that now requires 31 months?

Mr. STEWART. Let me start on that. Maybe Dr. Mills would like to add something to that or perhaps Ray Solomon also. What we announced, of course, 13 months ago was the intent to develop an interim policy and then go through a public input process.

Direction was issued to the field by the Deputy Chief for the National Forest System that during that period of time, that they should not implement that policy.

However, we are aware that some managers locally made the decision to at least, if not modify, certainly change some plans that they were proposing and not to activities that would require road building in roadless areas. That was a local decision; certainly nothing done as a part of a national thing.

Mr. HILL. Let me just clarify that point because we have to go vote here. What you are saying is that any of the timber sales or any of the roads that were anticipated to be built during this interim period of time, the decision to not go forward with those sales were made by the local supervisors and the regional foresters without any input from Washington.

Mr. STEWART. Certainly to my knowledge, there was never any national direction. In fact, the national direction which came from the Deputy Chief for National Forest Systems said that they should not implement that until we had a final rule.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETERSON. The gentleman from Washington.

Mr. SMITH. Thanks. I will be brief because we have to run and much of the area has been well-covered by the questions and the answers of the two different panels.

Basically what we are wrestling with on this is you have both recreation and logging use access to public lands. The other thing we are wrestling with is I agree with a lot of folks who have talked about how access to public lands is very, very important to all of us.

That is something that we like about living in this country and certainly we like about my neck of the woods living up in the Northwest. The question is making sure that, that recreation and access or timber for that matter is not just available for those of us currently on the planet, but for those of us in the future.

I would hope we would want to leave that legacy and maintain some level of access for recreation and hopefully even logging. Now, the problem is more and more people want to do these things.

There is more and more demand, and that taxes the ability to conserve those resources. Whether it is a snowmobile, or a truck, or just people out there camping, it can have the effect of wearing

down the resource; particularly if you are talking about roads, if you are talking about access. Maintaining that balance is a very difficult task.

It is sort of like what happened in the suburbs. Everyone wanted to live there, partially, because it was not as crowded. You were away from the dense urban centers, and you could have some space.

Well, the problem was, everyone wanted to do that. Eventually, you had the same crowding and the same problem in the suburbs. We are wrestling with that and trying to deal with it.

That is the problem we have on public lands. You gentlemen have a very difficult job trying to do that. You have a difficult job just trying to maintain the current uses, much less thinking about the future and thinking about conservation to make sure that we do not use it all up and deny future generations of that same access.

So, I would just as to try to employ that balance as best you can in conservation and also usage. That is basically, I guess, all I have to say.

The other thing that would be interesting is that as you play out these statistics is to truly break down the difference between recreation and logging.

If you are talking about new roads, at least when they are initially built, you are talking about logging. That is kind of my impression. Others may disagree. Now, maybe 5 or 10 years down the road after you have built the new road, it opens up all kinds of new uses.

The new roads are primarily logging issues. If recreation is your concern, then maintenance should be your concern. Basically, that is all I have to say.

Mr. PETERSON. I want to thank the panelists. We are going to cut it off at this because we have to go vote and we will not hold you up.

There will be some questions submitted in writing that will allow some of the panelists who did not get to ask some of their questions.

[The questions referred to may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. PETERSON. So, we want to thank you very much for participating today. There was a statement here. You said you wanted to work with us. The Subcommittee appreciates that, but let us start working together and see if we can bring this to a positive solution without taking years.

Mr. STEWART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Chenoweth may be found at the end of the hearing.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Amador may be found at the end of the hearing.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Squires may be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. PETERSON. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for the record follows.]

STATEMENT OF DR. DAVID L. ADAMS, PROFESSOR OF FOREST RESOURCES, EMERITUS, COLLEGE OF FORESTRY, WILDLIFE AND RANGE SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Dave Adams and until recently I was Professor of Forest Resources in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences at the University of Idaho. My specialty is silviculture with emphasis on forest health and sustainability.

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the importance of road access to accomplish forest health and other forest management activities. Silviculture may be defined as the management of forest vegetation to meet objectives, whatever they may be. Perhaps the most important forestry objective is to manage forests to sustain their long-term productive capacity—capacity to not only produce wood fiber but to foster wildlife through maintenance of appropriate habitat, to provide a source for clean water, for recreational opportunities and many other commodity and amenity values. I am concerned that, without adequate access, we will not be able to manage for sustainable forests.

With the decreased levels of timber harvest on Federal lands it is often assumed that managers can just lock the gates, rehabilitate the roads and walk off. This is not the case. There is silviculture, or management of forest vegetation, to do whether or not it is done for the purpose of providing wood fiber to local mills, and it is very difficult to accomplish needed practices without access.

A very important aspect of sustainable forest management is to avoid the conditions which promote insect outbreaks, the spread of tree diseases, and damaging wildfires. I know that all members of this committee are quite knowledgeable about the insect, disease and wildfire problems that are facing many forested areas of the country. As you know, past conditions and events such as fire exclusion, early logging practices, introduction of exotic pests, grazing of domestic livestock, and the mere presence of settlers have caused changes in our forests. Forest density and tree species composition are commonly much different from those of historic forests. For example, in Idaho, forests of the "white pine region" are now dominated by grand fir and other species where western white pine (our state tree) was historically predominant. Unfortunately, the firs are much more susceptible to root rots, bark beetles, and defoliators than were the pines. An exotic disease, introduced from Europe, early selective logging and fire exclusion contributed to this change.

In southern Idaho, forests which were predominately ponderosa pine and western larch before the turn of the century are now dominated by dense stands of Douglas-fir and true firs. Stands which historically carried 25 to 30 ponderosa pine trees per acre now support over 500 Douglas-firs per acre, causing moisture stress and increased susceptibility to bark beetles and wildfire damage. And, because of shade tolerance, the firs maintain branches on the lower parts of the boles, providing "ladder fuels" which carry ground fires into the crowns.

The main point here is that much of the forest is different from conditions 50, 75, or 100 years ago. And the current conditions are leading to increased damage from forest pests and wildfire. Insects, diseases and wildfires have always been a part of the forests—and the forests would not do well in their absence—but the widespread outbreaks and the recent catastrophic fires were not common occurrences in the past.

Harvest rates in the Rocky Mountains are about 29 percent of growth, and for the nation as a whole, growth exceeds harvest. The large difference between growth and removal, such as in the Rocky Mountains, is a disturbing situation, The result is a large buildup of forest biomass, and unfortunately, mother nature is taking care of this through increased insect and disease-caused growth loss and mortality, often followed by fire. With the abnormally large amounts of biomass, when the fires occur they are not the low-intensity ground fires that were common in much of the West, but are frequently high intensity fires that are difficult or impossible to control and which burn much longer in one place causing long-term site damage. Sites damaged by the intense fires can no longer sustain the values of the past. Another result of the large fires is that post-fire regeneration will be relatively uniform over large areas, reducing natural landscape variability.

So, what do we do about this? First, density reduction, usually through thinning, is necessary over large areas. Then application of prescribed fires may be appropriate. Both of these activities require road access. It is unlikely that funding will be made available to the Forest Service to do the needed thinning and just leave the thinned trees on the ground—and even if this were possible it would not be advisable because of the fuel accumulation. All or part of the cost of thinning can be retrieved through sale of the trees removed, but this requires access. Safe application of prescribed fires also requires access.

What can be done to move species composition back to more pest- and fire-resistant conditions? The solution, of course, is to regenerate the appropriate species, often through planting. But, before the sites can be planted, at least a portion of the existing trees must be removed. Both the harvest operations and the planting require road access.

Another important forest roads consideration is the movement toward greater use of uneven-age management, including the single-tree and group selection methods, and less use of clearcutting and other even-age harvest/regeneration methods. The selection systems involve frequent entries to essentially all of a given unit; hence, the use of more extensive and more frequently maintained road systems. With even-age systems, access to a given stand is usually needed only once or twice over a rotation (rotations in the Inland West are commonly 80 to 120 years). Infrequent access allows managers to close and often seed roads after a harvest cut and then reopen them for a thinning and then again for the next harvest. With uneven-age silviculture, access is needed at intervals of 10 to 20 years in the West. Therefore. it is not feasible to abandon or obliterate these roads after each entry as with even-age systems. So. these "less-intrusive" methods may actually cause greater impact due to the necessity for road systems that can be used more frequently.

It is common knowledge that open roads do impact wildlife and that roads are a primary source of steam sedimentation. However, much more habitat damage and sedimentation results from widespread pest outbreaks and catastrophic wildfires. Whether the vegetation is managed for forest health, to enhance wildlife habitat, or to provide wood fiber, it is difficult if not impossible to accomplish without road access.

I have had frequent discussions with concerned citizens who agree with the need to accomplish a given silvicultural prescription—as long as no new roads are built. It is a vexing dilemma.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions on this very important forest management issue.

STATEMENT OF HON. RON MARLENEE, CONSULTANT, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL

Chairman Chenoweth and Members of the Subcommittee:

Safari Club International is an organization representing a broad spectrum of sportsmen. Madame Chairman thank you for focusing this hearing on access, one of the greatest problems that sportsmen have today is access. Madame Chairman the greatest threat to the future of hunting is sufficient access for those who are not of substantial means. We now have an agency that proposes to curtail that access.

I appear here today as the consultant for Governmental Affairs for Safari Club International. In my 16 years in Congress I served on the committees responsible for forest management in both the Agriculture Committee and the Resources Committee. I have seen good management and I have observed bad management. I have seen good proposals and bad proposals. The proposal to unilaterally close roads is a bad proposal for sportsmen and other recreational users. The proposal is so bad that it must have the dedicated professionals in the Forest Service shaking their heads. As a matter of fact, professionals bold enough to do so are expressing opposition. And many who are not bold enough are privately expressing resentment of the agenda for lock-up and lock-out.

At Missoula, Montana on February 6th, 1999 in an AP wire story, Chief Dombeck equated recreationists and sportsmen to the timber industry and grazing. He stated, "The recreation industry needs to take note, they need to look at some of the issues the timber industry ran up against 20 years ago. The side boards for recreation are no different than those for timber or grazing or any other use." In the same delivery he expressed satisfaction at the reduction of timber harvest by 70 percent during the past ten years. Can we extrapolate that the Chief wants to see a similar reduction in recreational use?

The road closure effort is not a timber issue as the Administration has been trying to spin. This is a reduction in hunting opportunity, a reduction in recreational use and be termed a recreation/hunter access issue. The Chief congratulated those managers who proposed banning cross-country travel with all-terrain vehicles. Their proposal would limit ATV use to established roads and trails. Then of course, they propose to eliminate as many roads and trails as possible. This of course means ATV's would be a thing of the past, even for game retrieval. It also has serious implications for snowmobiles.

The agenda of lock-out is not new. I recall, approximately fifteen years ago a coalition of privileged users set down on paper the goals and agenda they wanted to achieve on public lands.

(1) Eliminate timber harvest
(2) Eliminate as many roads as possible
(3) Eliminate all mechanical/motorized use
(4) Secure all the wilderness possible
(5) Eliminate horses
(6) Eliminate hunting
(7) Establish limits of human intrusion (Forest Service—limits of acceptable change)

Because access on public lands is important to recreation, to good game management and to sportsmen, we have to question if the proposal to elmlinate access on public land is a political decision. The evidence that answers that question seem to indicate a strong yes. Of the seven items listed on the agenda, five have and are being accomplished. The purists have not achieved two of the goals, eliminating hunting and eliminating horses. However, given the ever increasing regulations and requirements on horses in the wilderness and the protection of designated species, they are moving in the direction of elimination.

And by the way Madam Chairman, I have received rumors that the public land mangers are trying a new concept. That is that all public lands are off limits unless posted open.

We have to question what happened to the validity of the Forest Management Plans that everyone participated in and that the taxpayers spent hundreds of millions of dollars on.

We have to ask if the Forest Service is repudiating the credibility and credentials of its own personnel and the validity of its own findings. These were the professionals who evaluated watersheds, wildlife sensitive areas, recreational needs and validity of roadless and wilderness designations. The Forest Service does all of this prior to building a road or even establishing a trail.

We as sportsmen question the intent of a suddenly conceived or politically instigated concept that the bureaucracy must invoke a moratorium and involve themselves in a new round of evaluations of existing access to property owned by the general public.

If the Forest Service must persists in this duplicative effort, then sportsmen should have the opportunity to participate in a hearing on every forest. When ill feeling already exists about being denied access, then to deny the opportunity for input is an insult to sportsmen, the elderly, the handicapped and the family oriented recreationist. We want to insure that this new effort does not further erode an already diminishing access to recreational opportunity on public lands.

Increasingly sportsmen are coming up against pole gates, barriers and no motorized vehicles signs when they arrive at the edge of public property. This Committee should demand to know how many miles of roads have been closed in the past ten years and how many pole gates and tank barriers have been put up in the past ten years.

In an effort to justify further road closures the Forest Service implies that hunting in the forest system is having a negative impact on wildlife. They contend that access has led to "increased pressure on wildlife species from hunters and fishers." My experience has been that the Forest Service consults extensively with state wildlife agencies and that the jurisdiction of wildlife and hunting is primarily a state right and responsibility. Because the Forest Service allegation appears in their public document, because it impugns the role of hunting in conservation and because it denigrates the capability of state wildlife management, I would suggest this *Committee require the Forest Service to name even one state wildlife agency that is not fulfilling their obligation.* We know of none and resent the fact that this ill thought out statement is being used to justify closures considerations that could be harmful to sportsmen and to wildlife management.

The reason SCI is alarmed is that the public lands of the Forest Service are a destination for hunters in our country. Over 16 million days of hunting occurs annually in the National Forest. For many of these hunters and sportsmen the only opportunity to hunt is on the public land. Safari Club International is committed to insuring access in the forest for this group of sportsmen. We are gratified to have worked with both Federal public land mangers and State Fish and Game officials. We hope we can do so again in an attempt to find reasonable solutions.

In closing Madame Chairman let me quote from Bruce Babbitt, in a February 1996 press release:

"Many American don't realize what an enormous contribution hunters, anglers, and recreational shooters make to conservation of our natural resources. In fact, these individuals are among the Nation's foremost conservationists, contributing their time, money, and other resources to ensuring the future of wildlife and its habitat. Under the Federal Aid program alone, a total of more than '5 billion in excise taxes has been a total of more than to support state conservation programs.' "

This statement should be handed personally to Chief Dombeck with the question; Do you really want to curtail one of the greatest conservation success stories of all time?

STATEMENT OF KELITA M. SVOBODA, LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT, AMERICAN MOTORCYCLIST ASSOCIATION

Chairman Chenoweth and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Kelita Svoboda. I am the Legislative Assistant for the American Motorcyclist Association. On behalf of the AMA and its over 232,000 motorcycle enthusiast members I thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and to provide comments on the Forest Service's road moratorium and long-term road policy.

The AMA is not opposed to the Forest Service taking a close look at roads on our National Forests. With the ever increasing use of forest roads by recreation-related vehicles, it only makes sense to work with the public to develop a long-term strategy for addressing recreation needs. Forest roads need to be built to safety and environmental standards fitting for the estimated 1.7 million recreation-associated vehicles traveling those roads every day.

However, we strongly disagree with the way the Forest Service has approached and implemented the interim road moratorium. We would like to draw your attention to a number of our concerns.

We were extremely disappointed to learn that after a contentious 13 month interim moratorium on road construction and reconstruction, the Forest Service will now begin its *official* moratorium to last an additional 18 months. The MA finds this even more frustrating given the fact that on February 25, 1998, Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck admitted to Representative Schaffer in testimony before this Subcommittee that the Agency could probably devise a long-term policy without a moratorium. This action begs the question: Why would an agency that readily admits it doesn't need to displace the public for any amount of time, devise a strategy that would do just that for a minimum of two and a half years?

We continue to be concerned with the methods by which the Forest Service collected data from the public and the continued use of ill-defined terms by the Agency. Open-houses sponsored by the Forest Service last year seeking friendly input from the public were anything but friendly to the public. More likely than not an attendee to one of these open houses found a video tape playing on a television extolling the virtues of the Forest Service's plan.

Furthermore, if an attendee were inclined to offer comment they would be directed either to where they could submit a written statement or worse yet, find a tape-recorder to speak into hoping that their comments would be heard by someone, anyone, in the future. If they were fortunate enough to find a Forest Service representative, they were often met with a general disinterest in what they had to say. Our Federal agencies should do a much better job in collecting public opinion.

We have serious concerns over the Forest Service's ability to obtain comment without being able or willing to clearly define critical terms consistently. For example, depending upon one's perspective and experience, the terms road, roadless, unroaded, ghost road, vehicle, highway use, decommission, and upgrade, can mean any number of different things. It seems impossible to receive credible and comparable comments when the Forest Service has not provided the public with a precise definition of the proposal's terms.

It is exactly this type of confusion that prevents the public from engaging in a coherent dialogue with the Forest Service about the road moratorium.

While we appreciate the efforts of Forest Service staff to include a new paragraph in the final rule, which attempted to define a road, it fell far short of its intention to fully clarify the interim rule.

Under the Forest Service definition, "unroaded" areas can contain unclassified roads—routes that are more than 50 inches wide and not intended for long-term highway use. The definition of "unroaded" areas also fits many all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails and connector trails used by off-highway motorcyclists. Many off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails are over 50 inches wide because the mini-dozer blade that is used to construct the trails are 50 inches wide. Even with these definitions, the

final rule is still unclear as to whether the moratorium applies to roads that are constructed or maintained as designated, recreational trails, but are not part of the Transportation System.

I assure you that any trail is likely to be over 50 inches wide at some point along the course of the trail. As currently worded, the term "unroaded" could thus encompass all recreational trails as roads, dependent upon interpretation by Forest Service personnel. These "roads" could then be decommissioned and made unavailable to the public forever.

For the reasons I have outlined, the Forest Service should alter its "50 inch" definition of a "road" to simply apply to vehicles over 50 inches wide, not vehicle travel ways. This would reduce confusion and make it clear that designated recreational trails are to be excluded from the road moratorium.

While we were told that the moratorium will not directly affect any single-track motorcycle trails, we remain concerned that the closures could block access to the connector trails that lead to these single-track trails, effectively closing them as well. As currently worded, it appears that the moratorium is aimed at reducing access to an entire class of trails with the intention of eventually closing them permanently. Indeed, as the Federal Register notice of the final interim rule on February 12, 1999 states, "... construction and reconstruction of unclassified roads in certain unroaded areas will be suspended as described in paragraph (b) of the final interim rule." (Federal Register, Vol. 64, Number 29, 36 CFR Part 212, p. 7297).

In addition to motorcycles, AMA's members enjoy other off-highway vehicles such as ATV's, snowmobiles, and 4 x 4's. Our members have established themselves within the outdoor recreation community as a responsible and environmentally friendly user group. They provide the Forest Service and other land management agencies with extensive volunteer hours for trail maintenance, graffiti removal from shared public facilities, and to ensure that all motorized recreationists obey trail rules.

We have worked with Forest Service staff for decades on developing environmentally responsible motorized trail management. However, we have recently had a difficult time defending that relationship to our members. They are extremely upset and disappointed with the way the Forest Service has gathered public input and even more so over the official moratorium.

The Forest Service is currently developing a long-term road policy. We are hopeful that the Agency has learned from the mistrust it created with the interim moratorium and will work with user groups to form clear definitions for all terms in order to provide a credible basis for collecting public comments.

Any long-term strategy needs to avoid placing priority upon the "aggressive decommissioning" of roads. Not only should these decisions be made at the local level with public involvement, but the priority should be on turning "roads" into trails, which are already in high demand by the public. The Forest Service should also define the terms "aggressive" and "decommission," because they mean different things to different users. Moreover, the Forest Service should pay closer attention to how much environmental degradation could occur if they remove an entire road, versus allowing it to become part of the landscape again through partial removal or simply letting nature run its course.

Additionally, the Forest Service needs to provide an improved forum for soliciting public input. A true "town hall" style meeting, would provide the public an opportunity to have discussions with Forest Service personnel and other members of the community. This type of meeting would be more beneficial than "open houses," and therefore gain greater public support.

Overall, it is incumbent upon the Forest Service to provide the same, accurate information to all of the Forest supervisors, district rangers, and those who have contact with the public to ensure that consistent policies, procedures and definitions are being circulated in regard to the road moratorium.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these comments. It has been a privilege to be here today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

STATEMENT OF RON STEWART, DEPUTY CHIEF, FOREST SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MADAM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the status of the Forest Service revised road policy. I am Ron Stewart, Deputy Chief for Programs and Legislation for the USDA Forest Service, and I am accompanied by Thomas L. Mills, Director of the Pacific Northwest Research Station.

Forest roads are an essential part of the transportation system in many rural parts of the country. They help to meet the recreation demands while providing economic opportunities from the National Forest System. The benefits of forest roads are many, but roads also create many ecological impacts on our watersheds. As the Natural Resource Agenda emphasizes, the Forest Service needs to maintain a road system to provide public access while reducing and reversing their environmental effects. The revised road policy is an essential part in implementing the agenda.

Our progress in developing the revised road policy can be outlined in three key steps:

First, the Forest Service implemented a temporary suspension to provide a time-out from building new roads into unroaded areas where costs of construction are usually high and values at risk are high, as well. This temporary suspension went into effect on March 1, 1999, and will expire upon the adoption of the revised road management policy or 18 months, whichever is sooner.

Second, the Forest Service is developing a road analysis procedure. This procedure will assist managers in using the best science to decide where, when, or if to build new roads in unroaded as well as roaded areas. The procedure will be available in 1999.

Third, the Forest Service is developing new regulations and direction to provide an environmentally sound road system that meets the needs of local people. The revised road policy is scheduled to be completed by fall of 2000.

I would like to take a moment to expand on each of these steps.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

The temporary suspension is necessary to allow us to protect socially important and ecologically valuable unroaded areas while we develop a protective and responsible revised road policy.

The potentially damaging ecological effects of a first entry into an unroaded area are often proportionately greater than the effects of similar construction or reconstruction in an already roaded area. The temporary suspension will provide time to refocus attention on the larger issues of public use, demand, expectation, and funding surrounding the National Forest road system.

The current road system developed to meet the transportation needs of the 1960's and 1970's does not reflect the needs of today. Timber hauling has decreased over time while recreation traffic has grown dramatically. Today, there are over 1,706,000 recreation vehicles per day on forest roads and 15,000 timber harvest vehicles per day. Timber traffic represents less than one percent of all forest road use.

Road management is a long-term financial commitment; as long as a road exists then it must be maintained. The national forest road system has 383,000 miles of classified roads and 52,000 miles of unclassified roads. Classified roads are roads constructed or maintained for long-term highway vehicle use. Unclassified roads are temporary roads or short-term roads associated with fire suppression, timber harvest and oil, gas or mineral activities as well as travelways resulting from off-road vehicle use.

Based on information we are preparing for a report to Congress on Forest Service maintenance and improvement needs, we estimate that with just the classified roads we have a deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs backlog of $8.4 billion and growing. Currently we only receive 18 percent of the funding needed to annually maintain roads to planned service, safety and environmental standards. Even with the significant increase in our budget request for FY 2000, funding does not address the annual maintenance needs or begin to address the backlog.

It is fiscally and environmentally irresponsible to continue to build roads when our current road system is in such disrepair and decline. Without adequate funding, the system will continue to decline causing environmental damage and posing human safety risks.

Effects of the Temporary Suspension

Based on the environmental assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact signed on February 2, 1999, the Forest Service anticipates no long-term effects on the production of forest resources as a result of implementing the temporary suspension. However, we did identify and analyze some short-term effects in the environmental assessment and benefit/cost analysis.

The primary tangible effects include:

The policy will suspend approximately 368 miles of construction and reconstruction of roads in unroaded areas. This represents a suspension of 4 percent of the permanent and temporary road construction and reconstruction within the National Forest road system during the 18-month period.

The suspension in road construction and reconstruction will reduce the potential timber harvest approximately 200 million board feet. This is approximately 3 percent of the volume offered from National Forest system lands during an 18-month period. However, since National Environmental Policy Act requirements have not been completed on a significant amount of this 200 million board feet, and some forests will be able to shift harvest programs to roaded areas, the actual affected harvest volume could be considerably less than what is estimated.

As an indirect result of the suspension, we estimate a reduction in annual employment nationwide of about 300 direct timber jobs per year over 3 years. To the extent that workers can not find alternative employment, local and county revenues will be decreased. There could also be an annual loss of about $6 million to local communities from payments-to-states from the 25 percent fund. These potential losses of employment and revenue may be offset by substitution of timber volume from areas not subject to the suspension and also by utilizing volume already under contract awaiting harvest. Also, the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations Recission Act (Pub. Law 105-174) may, to some extent, compensate for shortfalls in payments-to-states. Section 3006 of this Act provides compensation for loss of revenues that would have been provided to counties if no road moratorium, as described in subsection (a)(2), were implemented or no substitute sales offered as described in subsection (b)(1). In addition, if enacted the Forest Service proposal to stabilize 25 percent fund payments would mitigate the economic effects on counties and states.

The Forest Service has a wide array of programs to assist communities and we are committed to work with communities to identify and implement assistance programs while the interim rule is in effect.

ROAD ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The second step is the development of the road analysis procedure. This procedure includes:

a new science-based, multi-scale landscape analysis of ecological, social, and economic aspects of Forest Service road systems;

a process to help land managers make informed land management decisions about the management of roads, including maintenance, construction in both roaded and unroaded areas, reconstruction, or decommissioning; and

an expansion and extension of previous roads analysis tools and techniques.

During the last 12 months the Forest Service field tested the draft procedure on six national forests. The draft procedure is now undergoing a rigorous scientific peer and technical review. We expect to have the road analysis procedure available by 1999.

REVISED REGULATIONS AND DIRECTION

The third step is to revise regulations and directions for administration of the Forest Service Transportation System pertaining to roads. The revised road policy will:

update current road regulations and directions to provide the minimum forest road system that best serves the management objectives and public uses of national forests and grasslands;

ensure that the road system provides for safe public use, economically affordable and efficient management, and is environmentally sound;

ensure that road management decisions use a science-based analysis process to fully evaluate benefits and impacts of road systems within both unroaded and already roaded portions of the landscape;

ensure that new road construction does not compromise socially and ecologically important values of unroaded areas; and

ensure that regulations and direction will reflect budget realities.

As a result of the Advanced Notice of Rule Making (ANPR) published in the Federal Register in January 1998, we received a great number of comments on the values of unroaded areas and the proposed revised road policy. We plan to publish the draft policy, including response to the initial comments, in the Federal Register this fall for further public comment. The revised road policy should be finalized by Fall of 2000.

SUMMARY

Madam Chairman, the Forest Service shares your concern for a transportation system that is adequately funded and meets the needs of all Americans.

With the implementation of the temporary suspension and the progress made on the road analysis procedure, we can now complete the new policy that will provide

a science-based process enabling us to manage our road system in a manner that reduces environmental impacts and improves habitats and water quality.

This policy is a first step in focusing our limited resources on the roads most in need. We also need your support to fund adequately the reduction of our enormous backlog in road maintenance and reconstruction.

This concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you and Members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF HON. HELEN CHENOWETH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Today the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health convenes to review the Forest Service's current and proposed road management policies. In particular, we will focus on the Forest Service's progress in developing a long-term road management policy, which it initiated in January, 1998. We will also look at the agency's 18-month moratorium on construction and reconstruction of roads in roadless areas, which was first announced thirteen months ago but which formally took effect only this week.

This policy has generated a great deal of interest and concern over the past year. And since the Forest Service should now be two-thirds completed with the development of its long-term road management policy, I must ask why the agency decided to announce, three weeks ago today, the beginning of the 18-month moratorium. I fear it is because they have not accomplished much on the long term policy. Last year, after his initial announcement of the moratorium, Chief Dombeck testified that the moratorium was not yet in effect. But, in reality, it has been in effect ever since, because the Forest Service's land managers immediately altered any plans they had to enter roadless areas that would qualify under the proposed moratorium. By my count that makes it a two-and-a-half year moratorium.

One of my biggest concerns with the moratorium is its effect on the condition of our forests. The Forest Service has repeatedly told us that they have 40 million acres of national forest land at high risk of catastrophic fire. Their new insect and disease maps verify that this risk is only increasing—especially in Idaho, where much of the northern part of the state is mapped in red, indicating that 25 percent or more of the trees are expected to die within the next 15 years! This is a catastrophic condition that requires human intervention if we hope to keep our forests for our own and future generations.

Dr. David Adams, Professor of Forest Resources, Emeritus at the University of Idaho, submitted testimony for our hearing but unfortunately could not attend today. He is well known for his work on forest health and sustainability, and I greatly respect his views. With the Subcommittee's indulgence, I would like to read a few lines from his statement and submit it in its entirety for the record.

Dr. Adams wrote:

> "I am concerned that, without adequate access, we will not be able to manage for sustainable forests."

He explains:

> "A very important aspect of sustainable forest management is to avoid the conditions which promote insect outbreaks, the spread of tree diseases, and damaging wildfires . . . As you know, past conditions and events such as fire exclusion, early logging practices, introduction of exotic pests, grazing of domestic livestock, and the mere presence of settlers have caused changes in our forests. Forest density and tree species composition are commonly much different from those of historic forests . . . ."

Dr. Adams then offers an appropriate solution:

> "First, density reduction, usually through thinning, is necessary over large areas. Then application of prescribed fires may be appropriate. Both of these activities require road access. It is unlikely that funding will be made available to the Forest Service to do the needed thinning and just leave the thinned trees on the ground—and even if this were possible it would not be advisable because of the fuel accumulation. All or part of the cost of thinning can be retrieved through sale of the trees removed, but this requires access. Safe application of prescribed fires also requires access."

Dr. Adams concludes his testimony with the observation that while roads do impact wildlife and contribute to stream sedimentation,

> "much more habitat damage and sedimentation results from widespread pest outbreaks and catastrophic wildfires."

I must mention one other concern that I have heard. In the Forest Service's estimates of the impacts of the moratorium, we have been told how many miles of road construction, reconstruction and temporary roads, and how much timber volume, will be impacted in planned timber sales and "forest projects" over the next year. Yet the Washington Office has not displayed the extent of these impacts on the local communities that will surely occur if the volume is not replaced by other sales available to the same local economies during the same time period. I am told that field staff estimate the projected loss of 30 million board feet on the Boise and Payette National Forests, for example, will result in 300 lost jobs and at least $11 million in lost income to the community. There will be a corresponding drop in 25 percent funds to States and Counties, directly impacting school and county budgets. The Forest Service must be prepared to address these and other impacts of the moratorium now, not when the long term policy is completed.

I have not mentioned my concerns about recreation access, because we have two excellent witnesses available to address this subject. I look forward to the testimony of all our witnesses, and I thank you all for your willingness to appear before us today.

STATEMENT OF OWEN C. SQUIRES, PULP AND PAPERWORKERS RESOURCE COUNCIL, ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Madam Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Owen C. Squires. I am employed at Potlatch Corporation in Lewiston, Idaho as a digester cook in the pulp mill. I am here representing the Rocky Mountain Region of the Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council [PPRC], an organization with 300,000 members nationwide.

I am saddened and alarmed by Forest Service efforts to achieve some romantic notion of management of our public forests in which people play no part. The road moratorium is just the latest example of hand-off denial by an agency that has lost its way and is now wandering in the wilderness of conflicting social values that marks the end of our century.

Roads provide access to public lands for a variety of reasons that are well known to this Committee. What is not well known is that roads are also the keys to managing people and resources in ways that allow for sustainable forests over time. Roads provide access for recreation and allow us to manage recreation impacts. They also provide a way to keep forest healthy by entering diseased stands and removing sick and dying trees, thinning overcrowded trees, and managing fire, wild and prescribed. Remove the roads or artificially manage roads to meet philosophical rather than real on-the-ground objectives and you remove the ability managers have to respond to specific situations in appropriate ways.

For example, north Idaho is experiencing the worst outbreak of Douglas fir bark beetle we have ever known. These are not my words but the words of Idaho Department of Lands entomologist, Ladd Livingston, and Idaho Panhandle forest supervisor Dave Wright. Tens of thousands of acres of trees are at stake. Some of the worst outbreaks are in roadless areas as defined by the moratorium. These areas were not named as wilderness in any Act of Congress. Environmentalists did not identify them in Forest plans as important to the environmental industry. But the moratorium by definition has removed any opportunity we might have had to enter these areas and remove dead and dying trees and improve conditions in timber stands. Nor is this situation unique to north Idaho. I need not revisit the mountains of research telling us that western forests are in trouble everywhere.

No less a self-proclaimed authority on forest health than Dr. Art Partridge, a forest science professor, late of the University of Idaho, claims that this is not a problem at all but is a smoke screen, a shell game used by industry to just cut more trees. Dr. Art claims bugs are "natural" in this situation and they should be allowed to run their course, that people have no claim to salvage the trees for human use.

Madam Chairman, cancer is natural. I am among those who hope fervently that we are not content to let cancer run its course without a fight. The war on cancer requires avenues of approach. Bark beetle management—and management needs in general—require avenues of access if we are to have the flexibility we need to manage the land.

Mr. Livingston says managed forests are impervious to beetle attack and I believe him, Mr. Partridge says we should stand back and watch our forests burn, banquets for bugs, graveyards of neglect, fuel for killing fires. I reject that categorically.

We need our roads. We need the ability to put roads in places where we need them, and take them out of places where we do not.

This simplistic approach of the Forest Service will cost our society greatly in the coming decade. It will not be in overstatement when I stand in the middle of hundreds of thousands of acres of blackened timber and ruined lives a few years down the road and proclaim that the Forest Service road policy and environmentalist agendas brought us to this place. I will hold those who hold forest management hostage responsible and liable, morally and in fact, for the destruction that will surely come, our prayers notwithstanding. They have veto power over public forest management but my claim to the public forests is as strong as theirs.

In the small town of St. Maries, Idaho, a town so beautiful it can move you to stillness in any season of the year, stands a monument to over 50 firefighters who died in battle on a hot day in August in 1910 in the Big Creek drainage near St. Maries. A contributing reason for their deaths was the lack of roads and access. There's room in the circle of heroes at St. Maries for more Idaho firefighters and I pray we will not gather there again under such sad circumstances.

But public safety is at stake. And this is not a smokescreen. Flagstaff, Arizona almost burned in 1996 from a wildfire in unmanaged stands of trees. Please review a copy of the March 1 edition of the High Country News, the preeminent publication of the views of environmentalists in the West [attached]. I promise you, Madan Chairman, that the headline says "Working the land back to health." I almost cried when I read Ed Marston's passionate appeal to others of his ilk to work with "people who work the land, who can invent machinery and logging and grazing techniques, and who can put together capital and labor and markets to restore the land." I am labor, and I welcome Mr. Marston to the table and I stand ready to help.

The safety of our rural communities like Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint and St. Maries is directly at stake. This is real. The Forest Service says so and I believe them. And we need roads. And Mr. Marston knows it. And I know it. And you know it. And the operational Forest Service—the Forest Service on the ground in Idaho—know it. So I guess we just need to get the word to Mike Dombeck, somehow. The long-term health of the land demands it.

This concludes my remarks and I stand for questions.

Were bears enticed to trespass? *page 3*

An Indian perspective on a famous battle *page 6*

High Country News

March 1, 1999 *Vol. 31 No. 4* *A Paper for People who Care about the West* *One dollar and fifty cents*

Working the land back to health

E A GREAT FOREST: The 1926 *American Lumberman Magazine* featured central Arizona's never-logged ponderosa pine forest (Photo courtesy Dale Schickedanz)

David Brower tells us all environmental victories are temporary and all defeats permanent. This special issue of *High Country News* tests that proposition.

The two major stories here open long after crushing environmental defeats occurred. The magnificent ponderosa pine forests around Flagstaff, Ariz., were heavily logged during the past century, and the cut-over land has now sprouted into fire-prone thickets. To the west and north, the once-healthy grasslands of the Trout Creek Mountains in eastern Oregon were long ago grazed almost bare, degrading the land and the streams that depend on it.

Can those two very different landscapes be restored to health, or are the defeats permanent? The first story, by staff writer Michelle Nijhuis, examines a consensus effort to thin the ponderosa trees and bring back fire. The second, by freelance writer Tom Knudson, reports on efforts to restore the watershed and save the Lahontan cutthroat trout by improved methods of grazing. Here, too, consensus is at the center of the effort.

But why should we pursue restoration by involving the very industries and often the same individuals that damaged the land in the first place? The best answer is that in a time of tight public money, restoration depends on creating economies that can produce healthy land and profits, and creating economies is not something environmentalists are very good at.

Environmentalism is a big-picture movement, valuable when it comes to imagining a different kind of world than the one we live in, but usually incapable of implementing that vision. Implementation takes people who work the land, who can invent machinery and logging and grazing techniques, and who can put together capital and labor and markets to restore the land. Environmentalists need to be at the table because we understand what the land should look like. But others must translate that vision into concrete achievements.

Those environmentalists who participate in consensus efforts aren't doing it out of the goodness of their hearts, or because they are foolish and overly trusting. They do it because they need help to get their way.

The same enlightened but selfish reasoning brings ranchers, loggers and federal land managers to the table. They join consensus efforts because it is the most efficient way for them to do business today. Even with a hostile Congress and a pale-green president in power, environmentalists have so changed the laws and society's values that we have a veto over much of what happens in the West.

The challenge is to accept the reality of our power, and to turn from a total concentration on opposition to some problem-solving. This issue of *High Country News* paints a picture of people who are doing that. — ***Ed Marston***

Consensus up close

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Flagstaff searches for its forests' future

By Michelle Nijhuis

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — It was June of 1996, and temperatures had already cracked the 100-degree mark all over the Southwest. The brief winter rains were a dim memory, the sky was cloudless, and ponderosa pine forests near this northern Arizona town were choked with dry underbrush and spindly trees. Forest Service firefighters geared up for a white-knuckle fire season.

The political climate was heating up, too. Logging in the area was at a standstill, since a successful lawsuit over Mexican spotted owl habitat had put the brakes on federal timber sales in the Southwest. The Forest Service and the environmental community were at loggerheads, with both camps hurling insults at each other in the press and predicting doom for the region's forests. Less than a year earlier, angry demonstrators in northern New Mexico had torched an office of Sam Hitz, head of the environmental group Forest Guardians.

On June 20, the tension broke. A lightning strike sparked a fire near Flagstaff, and within hours the blaze was out of control.

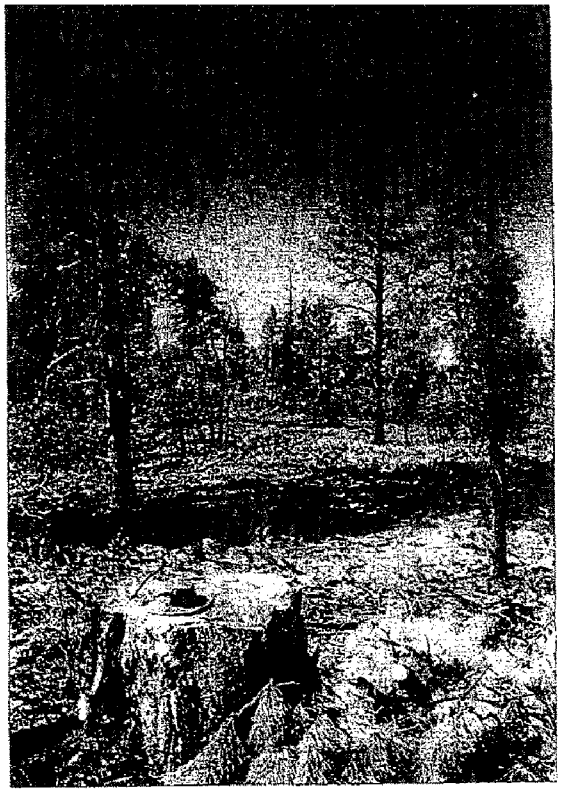
"From our front porch, it looked like Dante's Inferno. It was terrifying," says Bob Miller, an attorney who lives near the San Francisco Peaks on the northwestern outskirts of town. "We were in a total panic." The Hochderffer Hills fire swept through 16,400 acres of ponderosa pines before it was controlled nearly two weeks later, making it the largest fire in the history of the Coconino National Forest. Although no lives or homes were lost, everyone knew it had been a close call.

"Flagstaff has dodged the bullet many, many times," says Paul Summerfelt of the city's fire department. "It's no longer a question of if. It's a question of when."

With warnings like this in mind, a group of locals devised a plan to try to reduce the fire danger in the forests around town. Two years later, the plan still has a long way to go, and heated controversy continues over its approach. Still, the Grand Canyon Forests Partnership has accomplished this: unexpected! Environmentalists are designing logging projects, scientists are defending their theories to laypeople, and the Forest Service is turning its planning process inside out. Somehow, the group has managed to blur the battle lines in the forests of the Southwest.

Restoring the forest

Peter Fulé, a forestry researcher at Northern Arizona University, grasps the trunk of a ponderosa pine. The tree is at least 10 feet tall, but so slender that Fulé encircles it with one hand. "This tree is probably about 80 years old," he says.



"SOME TREES ARE GOING TO GET CUT": An old-growth ponderosa stump (Norm Wallen photo)

We're at the Fort Valley Experimental Station, a 4,600-acre Forest Service research forest. One hundred years ago, says Fulé, huge ponderosa pines and open grasslands covered the highlands of the Southwest. The forest floor was sunlit, and early settlers drove their wagons between the massive pines.

Now, the forest here is so thick that it's difficult even to take a walk. After Anglo settlement, loggers took out the large trees, heavy grazing beat down the grasslands, and firefighting broke the natural burn cycle. Without wildfires to thin the forest, thickets of puny trees soon replaced the grasslands. These small trees, like the one Fulé grips, rarely have the growing space to become fat, old-growth "yellowbelly" ponderosas, even after 80 years in the woods.

Fulé, along with Wally Covington, Margaret Moore, and Doc Smith at the Northern Arizona University School of Forestry in Flagstaff, has been trying to figure out how to give the larger pines some breathing room (*HCN*, 11/13/95). Fortunately, says Fulé, "because of the arid environment, we still have on the landscape a pattern of previous conditions."

It's a story told in stumps. Wood rots slowly in the dry climate of Arizona, so it's relatively easy to see what the forest looked like in presettlement days: for every tree that stood 100 years ago, there's a stump. Fulé and his colleagues want to use these clues to recreate the landscape of grasslands and giant pines.

"The goal of restoration is to re-establish natural conditions," says Covington. "Natural" is a difficult term to pin down, he admits, but the presettlement West provides the clearest definition. "That's getting at the best information we have," he says.

Covington is as much at home in the Southwest's 19th-century landscape as he is in today's dense ponderosa pine forest, since his academic work revolves around the history of these forests. He has been the most outspoken supporter of the university's research, and his warnings of catastrophic fires and calls for large-scale thinning have made him a controversial figure in the Southwest. While some environmentalists praise his foresight, others accuse him of muddling their message.

His work is now the basis for the Grand Canyon Forests Partnership plan for the Forest Service land around Flagstaff. It's his largest restoration project yet, and the one most likely to grab public attention. Suddenly, he's no longer shouting warnings from the ivory tower. He's helping to plan the future of the ponderosa pine forests, and he's not just answering to his peers anymore.

The partnership begins

It took the fires of 1996 to push Covington and his colleagues into the public eye. During the previous 10 years, opposition to Forest Service timber sales by environmental groups had caused a dramatic slowdown in public-lands logging. By the time the Hochderffer fire was threatening Flagstaff, the 16-month injunction on commercial logging was in place.

As the fire danger in the dense ponderosa forests became harder to ignore, some environmentalists wondered if their victory over the timber industry could backfire. A fire like the Hochderffer might someday start on the wrong side of Flagstaff, and the town would be standing directly in its way. Such a disaster could turn public opinion around and bring large-scale logging roaring back to life.

Was there a way out? Brad Ack, projects director for the Flagstaff-based Grand Canyon Trust, turned to the university researchers. "What we needed was a reverse timber sale, an anti-timber sale," he says. Their research convinced him that a new sort of timber sale could help restore the forest.

With Covington's work in mind, Ack approached Fred Trevey, then the supervisor of the Coconino National Forest. "I said, 'Fred, why don't we try this approach?' " he remembers.

The Trust wanted to create a non-profit foundation, the Grand Canyon Forests Foundation, that would work with the agency and the public to develop a restoration-based management plan for the federal forest land in the Flagstaff area. The foundation, administered by a partnership of local groups, would raise money for the project by selling off the small trees taken out of the forest.

Ack got a warm reception. "I had been thinking and worrying about what to do for a long time," says Trevey, now retired. "Everybody yells and screams about a timber sale, which I can understand ... the traditional Forest Service approach just didn't work." Trevey thought the agency needed to get more involved with the community, and he saw Ack's idea as an opportunity to do just that.

But the plan was nearly crushed by the bureaucracy of the Forest Service, where large-scale timber sales and huge firefighting budgets are still the way business is done. Trevey suffered through a year of negotiations within the agency before the project got a go-ahead.

"'Negotiations' is a nice word," says Trevey, who went to Washington, D.C., to support the project. "The hierarchy drove me nuts. It was awful. I was ready to kick doors down."

The top Forest Service administration reluctantly signed off on the experiment, but Coconino National Forest staffers were still suspicious. Few were enthusiastic about working with the very groups that had stonewalled their plans.

"We had a lot of reservations," says John Gerritsma, the Forest Service liaison with the partnership. There was no communication from the supervisor's office about the project, he says, and many people didn't understand the proposal. "After all, if we can't sell timber, how do you expect a nonprofit to do it?" he and his colleagues asked at the time.

But the deadlock in the Southwest's federal forests convinced Gerritsma and a few colleagues to give the partnership a chance. "(Some areas) had been thinned, and there had been some burning," he says, "but the forest was becoming more dense at such a rate that we weren't having much of an impact."

The Grand Canyon Trust enlisted partners: Flagstaff and its fire department, Northern Arizona University, The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Arizona Game and Fish, among others. The Forest Service agreed to work with the partnership; with Gerritsma assigned as full-time liaison.

> "To buy off on the concept that some trees are going to get cut just kills me."
>
> — *Martos Hoffman, Southwest Forest Alliance*

The partners quickly developed an ambitious plan. They proposed to thin 100,000 acres — about 150 square miles — of federal forest land around Flagstaff, using Covington's restoration ideas. Members agreed to start with a 300-acre study plot and move on to a 10,000-acre area near Fort Valley in the spring of 1999. By thinning this much acreage each year, they said, the work would be completed in 10 years, and low-level fires could then be reintroduced to maintain the open forest. The partners also planned to control exotic plants, restore native grasslands, and close some public roads in the project area.

Flagstaff, a growing city of over 50,000 people, is a university town with a recreation-based economy. International travelers are attracted by the Grand Canyon, and residents of Phoenix and Tucson often head uphill to Flagstaff during the summer to escape the desert heat. Because so many residents "eat the scenery" in Flagstaff, early public response to the idea of reducing fire danger was very positive, with the exception of motorized recreation groups opposed to the road closures. Local media, critical of the Forest Service in the past, also supported the partnership.

So far, so good, said many of the participants. But what about the environmental groups that had shut down logging in the Southwest? Could the plan stand up to their scrutiny?

Facing the stumps

"I hate stumps," says Martos Hoffman, the executive director of the Southwest Forest Alliance, as we tour the Alliance's study plot near Williams, Ariz., where the group is trying to restore a chunk of national forest land.

"I've been an advocate against forestry my whole life, and the idea of restoration is a very new one," Hoffman says. "To buy off on the concept that some trees are going to get cut just kills me."

But in some ways, cutting trees is just what the Southwest Forest Alliance has accepted. Its 1996 *Forests Forever*, published independently of the partnership, would restore the ponderosa forests,

continued on next page

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT The 1996 fire advances toward Flagstaff (Bill Cordasco photo)

'It's really a sales program'

Henry Carey is the executive director of the Forest Trust, a nonprofit community forestry group based in Santa Fe, N.M.

"The Forest Service is trying to get political support for a thinning program, but the fire problem is no more huge than it was 10 years ago, or 20 years ago. This notion of trying to 'fireproof' the forests (with thinning) — intuitively, that makes a whole lot of sense, but when you think of what happens in dry areas of the Southwest, you realize that the extent to which you'd have to thin would essentially create a desert.

"The fear-of-fire pitch has enormous appeal, but it's really a sales program. It isn't based on fact." — *M.N.*

'We need to get this stuff on the table'

Brett KenCairn is the coordinator of the Grand Canyon Forests Partnership. Before joining the Grand Canyon Trust this fall, he was the executive director of the Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy in Ashland, Ore., and a board member of the Applegate Partnership, a collaborative forest management group in southern Oregon.

"I think we're in danger if we let this become a technical process, and just have a different set of experts tell us how to do forestry better. It's really a social problem. The core of that social issue is the ways in which we've encouraged people to disregard social responsibility for the landscape they live in. They allow and abet mismanagement or malignant non-management in ways that will ultimately hurt us all.

"It's an enormous dilemma — when people think that wood comes from Home Depot, how is it that people have any sense of responsibility for the system? Most people in Flagstaff have no sense of connection to the forest, except recreation.

"Hopefully, this project will help to make the issues clearer — what does it really cost to do scientifically based restoration? How many acres do we need to do it on to meet ecological goals, and how much is that going to cost? Zero-cut activists don't have a sense of how much it's going to cost. We need to get this stuff on the table, and insert experience into the public dialogue." — *M.N.*

BEFORE TREATMENT: A modern-day ponderosa forest, with spindly trees crowded together (Michelle Nijhuis photo)

The partners' plan moves forward, but

continued from previous page

reintroduce low-level fire into the ecosystem, and create restoration-based jobs in northern Arizona. Its support of any kind of forestry is startling, especially because the Tucson-based Southwest Center for Biological Diversity, a key player in the fight for the logging injunction, is one of the Alliance's 50 members and works closely with the group's staffers (*HCN*, 5/30/98).

In principle, the Alliance and the partnership are on the same page — they both support some logging and some prescribed burning. But their strategies for restoring the forest are very different, and the conflict continues to test the partnership's commitment to collaborative decisionmaking.

Foresters using Covington's restoration plan have most of their decisions made for them. When timber markers find a presettlement stump, they preserve between one-and-a-half and four of the trees closest to that stump. With a few exceptions, all other trees are cut.

Hoffman says this formula fells too many big trees and disrupts the natural "groupy" distribution of ponderosas. "Wally's model isn't flexible enough to protect the trees that you want left on the landscape," he says.

The Alliance wants all trees larger than 16 inches in diameter to be left standing, and it calls for more small trees in the forest than Covington's plan would allow. It would also deliberately preserve the uneven distribution of trees, aiming to provide more canopy habitat for birds and small mammals in the thinned forest.

It's a complicated way to do forestry. When the Alliance handed out their plan of action for the 37-acre experimental plot near Williams, says Hoffman, the timber markers were shocked. "It's six pages long!" one of them said.

"There is an art to it," says Hoffman. "It requires some thinking about what's out there. We're talking about a change in mindset for the timber markers."

The Alliance's ideas have an unlikely supporter — a Forest Service researcher. "I think (the Alliance plan) has some real merits, because they spend a lot more time working with existing conditions," says Carl Edminster of the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Flagstaff. "They're taking more of a conservative approach, and I applaud them for that."

Like the Alliance, Edminster wants to modify the present forest instead of using more drastic thinning to kick-start the restoration process, but his approach would be likely to take more small trees out of the woods.

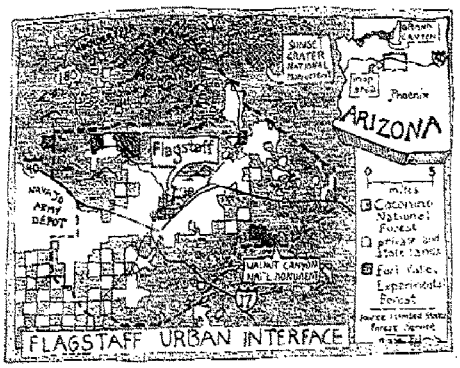
He does add that the Alliance plan might not be the best one for the flammable forest bordering Flagstaff. "They're new at being at the business end of a paint gun, so I don't know that they're really doing enough as far as improving the vigor of the trees and reducing fire danger," he says.

Both camps worry that Covington's plan and its relatively mechanical rules could "run wild." Since the treatment can be easily copied, it could soon become a model for forest management in the Southwest.

"I don't want to see any of these efforts adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to these patterns," says Edminster.

Others question the extent of the forest fire danger in the Southwest, and see the relatively aggressive approach of the plan as a risky precedent. "This is a westwide initiative in the Forest Service," cautions Henry Carey, director of the Santa Fe, N.M.-based Forest Trust (see sidebar page 9). "It's a program everyone's jumping on because it suits the political needs of the time; it's the new silvicultural methodology."

"This is not a prescrip-



TAKING SHAPE: The partnership's projects will take place on Forest Service land within the dotted boundary line

... AND AFTER TREATMENT: Manos Hoffman's group wants to leave any tree larger than 16 inches in diameter (Jake Bacon photo, Arizona Daily Sun)

common ground may have its limits

tion to manage ponderosa pine throughout its range — at all, ever, in any way," says Doc Smith, one of the university researchers, responding to these concerns during a Forest Partnership meeting in October. "This is a way to answer some questions about ponderosa pine. It isn't for the world, and it isn't for ponderosa pine everywhere."

But other federal agencies in the region are showing interest in Covington's approach to restoration forestry. Just 80 miles from Flagstaff, the Park Service is beginning a controversial program to thin some ponderosa stands in Grand Canyon National Park.

The debate has caused the partnership to step back. After the Southwest Forest Alliance threatened to appeal the plan, the partnership agreed to use the 16-inch diameter cap within the 10,000 acres to be treated during the spring season. But Hoffman says the plan must be scaled down further if the partnership wants to avoid a legal battle.

Despite their concerns about the project and its implications, however, Hoffman and other critics are generally positive about the process. Even after a somewhat tense exchange at a three-hour partnership meeting, Hoffman says, "This hasn't become an adversarial relationship ... Wally and I have coffee, and we talk about it. Using science as a tool is very, very important to me. And maybe in two years I'll be over there with Pete and Doc and Wally saying the same thing they are. I'm willing to be swayed."

It's this willingness to be swayed that defines the partnership. In fact, the flexibility of the members has kept the effort afloat, say many participants. "I've seen them all bend," says Norm Wallen, a Sierra Club member and former city councilman who has attended the partnership meetings.

"The barriers are really breaking down among groups," says Covington. "When you get on the ground with people who have a diversity of experience and education and background and get into the crucible of the real world, everything is brought into much sharper focus."

This isn't just a scientific turf war. The restoration plan used by the partnership — whether it's Covington's approach, the Alliance's prescription, Edminster's model, or some combination — is supposed to pay its way. In the past, that problem was solved by cutting the large, valuable trees, but that's no longer an option. It's here, where research collides with financial reality, that the partnership must deal with its most difficult questions.

> "This isn't just about consensus. This is about doing the right thing for the ecosystem."
>
> — *Brad Ack, Grand Canyon Trust*

A Marshall Plan for the forests

"The public is not yet facing what it's going to cost to put these landscapes back together," says Brett KenCairn, who recently joined the Grand Canyon Trust as the executive director of the Forest Partnership. Citing a federal General Accounting Office report released in September, he scribbles numbers on a piece of paper. "If it costs $300 an acre to do this work ... and we're talking about 8 million acres of forest in the Southwest ... then we're looking at more than $2 billion for just this region."

The project is currently funded by private foundation grants and individual partners' budgets, but members hope the work will eventually pay for itself through the sale of small timber for fiber, fuel and fenceposts. "Unless we get a Marshall Plan for the forests," says Ack, "we need a way to make (restoration) economically sustainable."

Even so, the partnership wants to build a barrier between the science and the economics of the project. "We tried to avoid having anyone who has a direct economic interest involved in the (planning) process," says Ack. "This isn't just about consensus. This is about doing the right thing for the ecosystem."

Since the nonprofit forest foundation, not the loggers, will be responsible for selling the truckloads of timber, Ack hopes to get rid of the "perverse incentives" for timber companies to cut more and larger trees.

But the group still has some perverse incentives. Because it believes that the sale of the trees can help finance the restoration project, the debate over the size of those trees is more than scientific, and the mixed motives make a lot of people uncomfortable. "As soon as you bring the timber people in, they want to take out the bigger stuff," says Norm Wallen.

"We're fearful of a centralized, capital-intensive industry that would create a huge demand for decades," says Hoffman.

Some outside observers are also worried, and not just about cutting large trees.

"When people are trying to create markets, there's a tendency to say, 'We've got a lot of (trees), we've got to bring in new industry and new technology to handle it,'" says Ryan Temple, community forestry coordinator for the Forest Trust. "If you bring that industry in and treat the problem, perhaps you return the forest to the condition you wanted, but you still have the industry there, and then where do they look? Do they start lobbying the Forest Service for more timber sales? Do they go to private land? Anytime you attract one industry to an area, you have to remember that there's a finite supply."

"Boy, I can't wait until we have that problem," responds Ack. "There's so many acres of this ecosystem."

He does concede that there's a need for caution. "There's going to be a limit to the size of this new industry," he says. "We don't want another timber economy."

On the other hand, the amount of timber that will be cut is still vastly greater than the demand. Handling small-diameter timber on a large scale requires pricey new equipment, and it's a financial risk that companies may not be willing to take (see sidebar page 12). If the risk-takers don't appear, the

continued on next page

... and it's still a risky experiment

continued from previous page

partnership won't have to worry about another timber economy — but it will have to start lobbying in earnest for its own Marshall Plan.

Beyond the mating dance

On paper, the partnership has come a long way since the Hochderffer fire blazed through the Coconino National Forest in 1996, but it's just beginning to take trees out of the woods. For those who think the fire danger around Flagstaff is on the rise, it's been a long wait.

"We're pretty good at our scientific skills, but not so good at our social skills."

— *John Gerritsma, Coconino National Forest*

"It's been a two-year mating dance, and there's been some real value to that process," says Paul Summerfelt of the city's fire department. "Now, it's time to move."

"It's not just putting up projects, it's making them happen," adds Gerritsma.

Gerritsma and others say the drawn-out process has brought a diverse group of people together to solve a problem — a public relations feat that the agency could not manage by itself. "We're pretty good at our scientific skills, but not so good at our social skills," he says. "That's what these other players have brought to the partnership."

And the partnership has given participants a chance to express their concerns early on, says Covington. "What is proposed for restoration is a much more developed, more mature proposal than what would have come out of the (National Environmental Policy Act) process," he says.

But all management plans, collaborative or not, are vulnerable to lawsuits, and there's no guarantee that the partnership's plan will not be hauled into court. The recently passed Quincy Library Group plan — designed to reduce fire danger on 2.5 million acres of Forest Service land in Northern California — has become a bogeyman for national environmental groups (*HCN*, 11/9/98). As the Southwest Forest Alliance dusts off its legal tools, the partners may find that their common ground still has its limits.

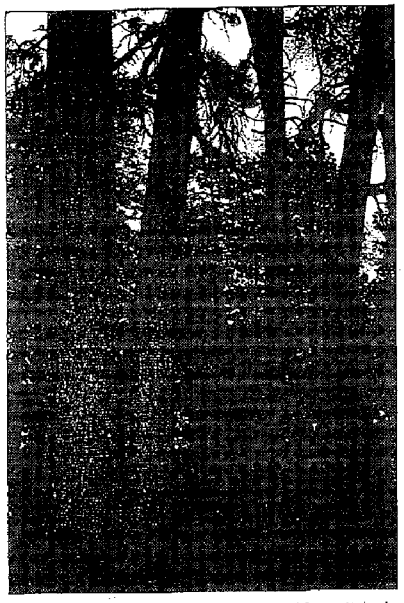
But unlike the Quincy group, the Forest Service had a strong voice in the partnership from the beginning. Timber interests, on the other hand, have been almost silent — a sign of the group's effort to isolate the science from the economics.

And the group approaches the project as an experiment, where the research questions are still up for debate. While this attitude has been a little hard for the researchers to get used to, it may be one reason for the partnership's apparent ability to bend, not break, during its ongoing controversies.

"It's easy to sit around as a scientist or restorationist and think you know it all," says Covington. "We've spent years discussing this stuff, and sometimes it's a little frustrating. You think, 'We've already been through this!' But that's what this is all about."

The partnership will be in the spotlight this spring, when Flagstaff residents see the first large-scale results of the restoration project, and no one can predict the reaction. The plan still has many roadblocks to face, since even if the group can raise enough money to thin 10,000 acres each year, the future of a truly restoration-based timber industry in Flagstaff is extremely uncertain. It's a risky experiment. But the participants seem to think it's worth a try — and no one is threatening to retreat to comfortable turf.

"I got into this business to get away from people. I just wanted to quietly go out there and measure trees," says Carl Edminster. "If people wanted to use the stuff, fine, but it wasn't my game. Now, I'm in the game of working with people. I miss the trees, but I'm excited about working with the people." ■



OLD AND STATELY: Old-growth ponderosa in nearby Grand Canyon National Park (Marlos Hoffman photo)

Michelle Nijhuis reports for *High Country News*.

YOU CAN CONTACT ...

- Brett KenCairn, Grand Canyon Forest Partnership, 520/774-7483;
- Marlos Hoffman, Southwest Forest Alliance, 520/774-8514;
- John Gerritsma, Coconino National Forest, 520/526-0866;
- Forest Trust, 303/983-5902.

Is there a market for tiny trees?

Flagstaff isn't the first place to try its hand at manipulating forests. One southwestern Colorado county has already learned some hard lessons about restoration's bottom line.

Like the forests around Flagstaff, the ponderosa pine forests in Montezuma County, Colo., show the effects of fire suppression, logging and overgrazing. The Forest Service wanted to restore these forests, and the county hoped to revive a struggling local timber industry by finding a market for small-diameter trees (*HCN*, 5/13/96). A collaboration among county officials, the Forest Service and Fort Lewis College researchers led to a pilot plan for about 500 acres of Forest Service land.

Like the Flagstaff group, the Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership "tried to do the right thing ecologically, and let the chips — so to speak — fall where they may," says Dennis Lynch, a Colorado State University professor who advised the project.

After thinning and burning the study area, however, the group had truckloads of timber with nowhere to go. Bigger trees were easy; they were sold as sawlogs and sent to a nearby mill. Other timber was sent to a local producer of excelsior (a paper-like packing material), who unsuccessfully experimented with the small pines. But more than half the wood travelled about 100 miles north — to the Louisiana-Pacific waferboard plant in Olathe, Colo.

It wasn't the local business the Montezuma group had envisioned, but L-P's purchases enabled the project to turn a profit on three of its five study plots. "That plant makes the difference in doing good forest restoration and not doing it at all," says Lynch. "If we couldn't put wood into that plant, it would just be stacked up on the road."

Although researchers are still gathering data on the ecological success of the restoration, Bill Romme, a Fort Lewis College professor, believes the prescribed burning "accomplished its goal" of thinning the forests and encouraging the growth of grass.

But the forests of northern Arizona tend to grow denser, with smaller trees, than those of southwestern Colorado, and Lynch says the much larger Flagstaff project may have trouble getting rid of its timber, even if it's willing to sell the trees outside the local community. "If they're confronted with a lot more of the small-diameter logs than we were, they've really got a problem," he says.

Despite the difficulties, Lynch still supports the idea of "doing the right thing ecologically," and says the Flagstaff partnership may have one major advantage over the Colorado experiment. Private foundations have begun to take an interest in restoration forestry, and the Flagstaff group has put together a sizable nest egg, giving it more time to find local buyers for the small logs. It may be just the push these projects need, says Lynch. "They've got some money to work with," he says. "We're poor folks."

— *Michelle Nijhuis*

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH
FOREST SERVICE INTERIM ROADS RULE
Testimony by Don Amador, Blue Ribbon Coalition, March 1999

Madam Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your subcommittee on the USDA Forest Service's Interim Roads Rule. As you know, the subject of forest roads and the public access they provide is critically important to millions of Americans. I commend Congress for providing oversight on this issue. Please enter this testimony in the public record.

The Forest Service (FS) misleads the public with respect to the interim road rule's (IRR) impact on recreational road and trails in roadless areas. According to the *Questions and Answers* section found on the FS's website, "recreation" roads (and trails) appear exempted from this rule. However, on page 16 of 36 CFR Part 212 the IRR states, "*construction and reconstruction of unclassified* (i.e. OHV trails) *in certain unroaded areas will be suspended.*" The FS should exempt the construction and reconstruction of recreational roads and trails in roadless areas.

The IRR uses the term roadless to confuse the public on the issue of what is a road. This effort by the FS violates the intent of Congress regarding the definition of a road **(exhibit A).** On page 16 of 36 CFR Part 212 the IRR states, *"Unclassified roads, including roads created by repeated public use and often used by off-road vehicles, do not disqualify an area from consideration as*

unroaded in the final interim rule." **Exhibit A**, a letter from Congress, clearly states that, *"the traditionally recognized network of unimproved vehicle ways that traverse millions of acres of public lands is suddenly no longer recognized... This definition [roadless] ignores the evident and the obvious; it defies a sense of reason, and it creates a host of problems."*

It seems clear that this IRR seeks to leave the public with the impression that there are a significant number of areas of 1,000 acres or more without roads. Being personally familiar with many road systems that were closed to "create" many of today's current inventory of designated Wilderness areas, I have concerns that this rule will be used to implement a new Wilderness program. It has been my impression that all Wilderness-like lands "untrammeled by modern man" have already been designated as Wilderness between 1964 and 1994. As you know, many of these areas "untrammeled by modern man" have included vast road systems, old towns, and pioneer dump sites.

The IRR should more clearly embrace roads-to-trails as a method to decommission a road while still providing recreational access. This concept really provides the FS with a win-win solution because is preserves access to the forest for recreation, resource management and monitoring while lowering road maintenance expenditures.

The FS should focus more on downgrading the maintenance levels of system roads to achieve various budget, environmental, and access goals. By

downgrading the maintenance level of a system road from a level 3/4 (*2WD cars/pickups*) to a level 2 (*high clearance 2/4WD & OHVs*), the FS can save maintenance costs while still providing recreational access.

The IRR wrongly implies that roads and trails have a negative impact on habitat and species viability when more studies show just the opposite (*e.g. Hollister Hills SVRA Study, etc.*). More science is showing that roads and trails contribute to species mobility and population growth when compared to some Wilderness (*non-roaded*) areas. Roads seem to improve some populations of native animal species. This should be noted and appreciated in the rule. So-called habitat fragmentation has not been well documented in current science. The IRR should reflect this fact.

Access roads should not be blamed for an increased number of forest fires. Professional foresters will tell you that lightening strikes on poorly managed (*high fuel loads*) public forests are the number one contributors to wildfires. Roads and the access they provide should not be a reason to close roads.

The IRR wrongly blames roads for declining fish populations. In a new report, *Forests and Salmon -- Fisheries Management Relationships in Northern California During the 19th & 20th Centuries*, you will find:

* *Natural erosion rates along the north coast are among the highest in the world*
* *Erosion from logging activities and roads accounts for less than 5 percent of sediment in streams*

* *Cyclical sedimentation changes are governed by local geology, tectonics and climate*

* *Government mandated removal of large woody debris from streams has had the greatest negative impact on spawning habitat*

The IRR correctly acknowledges that plans for road decommissioning should be done at the local level. Before any forest embarks on a road decommissioning program it should begin with involving local user groups in the identification of important classified and non-classified roads and trails. Any road closure and/or decommissioning must go through the NEPA process and site-specific analysis. The public civil rights must be protected.

Natural barriers including downed timbers and boulders should be used to close the entrance of a road in the decommissioning process. Avoid "tank traps" or large ditches that create significant public safety issues.

Culverts should only be pulled when identified as a significant environmental problem. There has been a tendency on some forests pull ALL culverts during the decommissioning of a road. This is both costly and unnecessary.

The IRR should provide a streamlined environmental process for recreational roads and trails that improve habitat or watershed concerns. Road and trail construction and reconstruction including trail repairs done to improve environmental conditions should have a streamlined environmental process.

The current policy of the FS to thwart the intent of Congress regarding what

is and is not a road has resulted in the delay of important trail projects in so-called "roadless areas" **(exhibit B)**. The FS should refrain from using the term roadless to describe forest lands that have important "unclassified" road and trail systems. Clearly, it is the intent of Congress that forest lands with public travel ways, both classified and non-classified, should disqualify said lands from being inventoried by the FS as roadless.

Recreational roads and trails in so-called roadless areas should not be subjected to more restrictions than roaded areas. Recreational roads and trails and the people who use them should not be made victims by the roadless area debates.

Thanks again for the honor of testifying before your subcommittee on this all too important topic.

Don Amador
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NEVADA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING

October 5, 1977

BRC Exhibit A

A

Mr. Guy Richard Martin
Assistant Secretary
Land and Water Resources
18th and C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Martin:

During the meeting last week between the Nevada Delegation and officials from the Department of the Interior, considerable discussion was focused upon what constitutes a "roadless area," and more particularly, what the exact definition of a "road" might be. As you are aware, the BLM Organic Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a review of all public land roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more having wilderness characteristics as described in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Forest Service is similarly involved in its Roadless Area Review and Evaluation.

In terms of the BLM Organic Act, the legislative history in defining a road is deficient. There is no definition of a road within the Act itself. The conference report on S.507 and the Senate report contain no definition or discussion of what a roadless area is to be. In our Subcommittee discussions of the "roadless" question, there was no discussion of definition. The only mention made of any definition is in the House report (Number 94-1163) on H.R. 13777. That attempted definition is both contradictory and confusing. That language was not discussed by the Committee members and was not agreed upon by them. The Department has apparently made a preliminary determination that it is the will and intent of Congress that a road is not a road, unless that road has been improved and maintained by mechanical means other than the regular traffic of vehicles. That was not the intent of Congress.

Using the above definition, the traditionally recognized network of unimproved vehicle ways that traverse millions of acres of public lands is suddenly no longer recognized. These numerous and necessary access routes are called roads in official government maps and literature, they are used as roads by hikers, campers, hunters, fishermen, cattlemen, miners, loggers and prospectors. The roads are evident on maps and on the ground. They are the traditional public vehicle ways,

and at some point in time are travelled by most users of the public domain. This definition ignores the evident and the obvious; it defies a sense of reason, and it creates a host of problems.

Millions of areas are suddenly restricted in use in these so-called "roadless areas" until they can be "studied to evaluate their wilderness potential;" within most of those areas is obvious no wilderness potential exists. But the proposed definition will result in bringing out public lands to a standstill. A myriad of potential problems exists. The BLM recognizes the sticky bureaucratic quagmire created using this definition, and acknowledges the potential waste of millions of dollars and months of time as the attempt is made to create roadless areas where roads, in fact, are in abundance, and then to dismiss these "roadless areas" from their study lists as it is obvious that the wilderness potential simply is not there. The result is a bureaucratic maze of mystery and malfeasance!

As the basis of the questionable definition of a road apparently originated in the House report, we the undersigned offer the following direction in determining the true will and intent of the Interior Committee, and of Congress:

1. The basic rule of common sense must be exercised.

2. The method of construction, the condition of upkeep, and the type of vehicle that can make use of the road should <u>not</u> be the dispositive factor in determining what a "road" is.

3. Of primary concern is whether a way has traditionally been used as a road by the public--whether it has accumulated enough beneficial use to have accustomed the public to its availability.

4. We wish to stress that those vehicles tracks created by mindless joyriders in environmentally sensitive areas do not constitute a "road."

We expect that the above criteria will be helpful as the Department continues implementation of the BLM Organic Act.

Mr. Guy Richard [illegible]
September 30, 1977
Page Three

Sincerely,

Jim Santini (D-Nev)

Gunn McKay (D-Utah)

Thomas S. Foley (D-Wash)

Dan Marriott (R-Utah)

Frank E. Evans (D-Colo)

Don Young (R-Alaska)

James L. Oberstar (D-Minn)

Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-N

Ned Pattison (D-N.Y.)

Jim Johnson (R-Colo)

Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo)

Robert J. Lagomarsino (R-Cal

#1

Harold Runnels (D-N.Mex)

Morris Udall (D-Ariz)

MAX BAUCUS (MT)

#2 Al Ullman (D-Oreg)

GEORGE MILLER D

CHARLES PASHAYAN R

John

AUSTIN J. MURPHY D

JERRY HUCKLEY D

STEVE SYMMS

[Signatures on 10/5/77 letter from Jim Santini to Secretary Guy R. Martin].

/s/ Jim Santini (D-NV)	/s/ Gunn McKay (D-UT)
/s/ Thomas S. Foley (D-WA)	/s/ Dan Marriott (R-UT)
/s/ Frank E. Evans (D-CO)	/s/ Don Young (R-Alaska)
/s/ James L. Oberstar (D-MN)	/s/ Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
/s/ Ned Pattison (D-NY)	/s/ Jim Johnson (R-CO)
/s/ Teno Roncalio (D-WY)	/s/ Robert J. Lagomarsino (R-CA)
/s/ Harold Runnels (D-NM)	/s/ Morris Udall (D-AZ)
/s/ Al Ullman (D-OR)	/s/ Max Baucus (D-MT)
/s/ George Miller (D-CA)	-- (illegible)
/s/ Charles Pashayan (R-CA)	/s/ Austin J. Murphy (D-PA)
-- (illegible)	-- (illegible)
-- (illegible)	/s/ Jerry Huckaby (D-)
	/s/ Steve Symms (R-ID)

United States
Department
of Agriculture

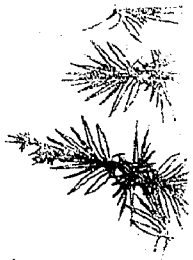
Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

*BRC Exhibit B

B

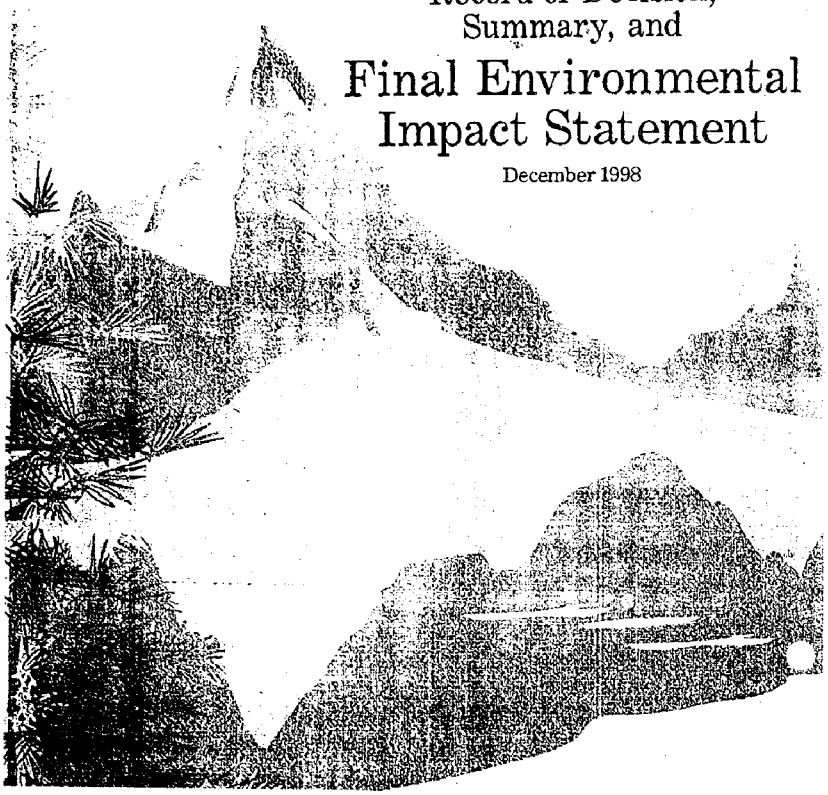
Sequoia National Forest Trail Plan



Record of Decision, Summary, and

Final Environmental Impact Statement

December 1998



4 - The four wheel drive route connecting the motorized corridor in the Bright Star Wilderness (on BLM land near Kelso Peak) to an existing road near Woolstaff Meadow in the Piute Mountains could still be considered through site specific analysis for new construction.

Based on the above criteria, Alternative 6 proposes approximately 10 miles of new trails for motorized and non-motorized use, and 35 miles of new trails for non-motorized use in roadless areas.

The roadless areas on the Sequoia National Forest are areas of special concern. By focusing the near future's motorized trail efforts outside of these areas, the public dialogue on management of these roadless areas can continue outside of the decisions covered in this document.

My decision at this time to limit proposed motorized trails in roadless areas is not meant to limit individual proposals in the future for motorized trails in these areas that would present an opportunity to improve management of these and surrounding areas. Motorized trails do not affect an inventoried roadless area's character in such a way as to eliminate it from consideration for future inclusion into the wilderness system.

Trail Management Practices

The majority of trail use standards apply to all of the action alternatives. All alternatives will allow use of OHVs and other wheeled vehicles, including bicycles, on designated routes only, as directed in the FLRMP. Wheelchairs are exempt from this restriction. There will no longer be any open areas for cross-country use by OHVs or wheeled vehicles, except for snowmobiles and ATVs on snow. Trails and roads open to OHV use will be signed or otherwise designated as open, and the hierarchy of right-of-way will be posted on heavily used trails. Public information and law enforcement will concentrate on user compliance with regulations to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Managing trail use on low standard roads will include appropriate signing to reduce potential conflicts and safety problems.

The trail construction and maintenance standards provide guidelines to protect natural resources. The majority of the standards are the same for all action alternatives. The Forest Service Trails Management Handbook, Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation: A Design Guide, construction and maintenance priorities established in the FEIS, Chapter Two, the maintenance levels defined in the FEIS, Appendix B, and the Monitoring Plan in the FEIS, Appendix A, will be used to direct construction and maintenance of trails.

The difference between alternatives, regarding trail management, is the proportion of trails that are proposed to be constructed and maintained for shared use or for specific types of use. Alternative 6 will construct and maintain most trails outside of wilderness for shared use. Trails for specific types of use will be constructed and maintained in some instances to meet the needs of those specific uses. Maintenance will concentrate in high use areas and specially designated trails, such as the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and National Recreation Trails. No opportunity areas will be created, where maintenance would have been concentrated in some other alternatives. This will provide managers more flexibility to construct and maintain trails where use or needs are greatest, without having to adjust opportunity area boundaries.

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State	Forest	Sales	Reconstruction (Miles)	Construction (Miles)	Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Volume (MMBF)
Colorado	Grand Mesa - Uncompahgre - Gunnison	2	3.2	2.9	7.0	13.1	5.6
	Pike - San Isabel	1	1.0	.0	3.0	4.0	3.0
	White River	1	.0	.7	.0	.7	3.0
**********							
sum		4	4.2	3.6	10.0	17.8	11.6
Georgia	Chattahoochee - Oconee	13	.9	2.6	15.1	18.6	11.4
**********							
sum		13	.9	2.6	15.1	18.6	11.4
Idaho	Boise	4	5.0	20.3	.0	25.3	26.2
	Nez Perce	2	.0	14.3	.0	14.3	15.7
	Payette	5	.0	7.4	.0	7.4	7.7
	Salmon - Challis	1	.5	.5	.0	1.0	.4
**********							
sum		12	5.5	42.5	.0	48.0	50.0
Minnesota	Superior	2	.0	.0	7.6	7.6	4.2
**********							
sum		2	.0	.0	7.6	7.6	4.2
Montana	Beaverhead - Deerlodge	2	.0	.0	1.3	1.3	.5
	Bitterroot	2	.0	1.5	.4	3.9	2.6
	Gallatin	1	.0	12.7	.0	12.7	7.3
	Helena	1	.0	.0	5.0	5.0	4.4
**********							
sum		6	.0	16.2	6.7	22.9	14.8
New Hampshire	White Mountain	2	.5	1.0	.3	1.8	4.0
**********							
sum		2	.5	1.0	.3	1.8	4.0
North Carolina	National Forests in North Carolina	1	.0	.0	.5	.5	.4
**********							
sum		1	.0	.0	.5	.5	.4
Oregon	Wallowa - Whitman	1	.0	.0	4.7	4.7	2.6
**********							
sum		1	.0	.0	4.7	4.7	2.6
Tennessee	Cherokee	11	.0	2.2	7.7	9.9	7.0
**********							
sum		11	.0	2.2	7.7	9.9	7.0
Utah	Ashley	2	18.7	.5	12.5	31.7	8.6
	Dixie	4	.0	3.7	9.6	13.3	18.0
	Manti - La Sal	1	.0	.0	8.6	8.6	10.0
**********							
sum		7	18.7	4.2	30.7	53.6	36.6
Virginia	George Washington	4	.0	5.7	8.1	13.8	7.1
	Jefferson	5	.5	3.5	1.3	5.3	4.3
**********							

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State	Forest	Sales	Reconstruction (Miles)	Construction (Miles)	Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Volume (MMBF)
sum		9	.5	9.2	9.4	19.1	11.4
Washington	Colville	1	.0	4.2	.0	4.2	4.1
	Okanogan	2	.0	12.3	.0	12.3	10.9
**********							
sum		3	.0	16.5	.0	16.5	15.0
West Virginia	Monongahela	3	9.7	2.3	1.7	13.7	6.8
**********							
sum		3	9.7	2.3	1.7	13.7	6.8
Wyoming	Bridger - Teton	3	1.0	.0	3.8	4.8	2.4
	Medicine Bow - Routt	2	1.3	20.1	3.3	24.7	14.4
	Shoshone	3	.0	2.8	4.2	7.0	5.0
**********							
sum		8	2.3	22.9	11.3	36.5	21.8
sum		82	42.3	123.2	105.7	271.2	197.6

State	Forest	Project Type	Projects	Direct Reconstruction (Miles)	Direct Construction (Miles)	Direct Temporary (Miles)	Indirect Reconstruction (Miles)	Indirect Construction (Miles)	Indirect Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Direct Volume (MMBF)	Indirect Volume (MMBF)	Total Volume (MMBF)
California	Inyo	recreation	1	.0	.1	.0	.0	.2	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0
	sum		1	.0	.1	.0	.0	.2	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0
	Sierra	recreation	1	.0	11.1	.0	.0	6.9	.0	18.0	.0	.0	.0
	sum		1	.0	11.1	.0	.0	6.9	.0	18.0	.0	.0	.0
sum			2	.0	11.4	.0	.0	7.1	.0	18.5	.0	.0	.0
Colorado	Grand Mesa - Uncompahgre - Gunnison	forest mgt	2	.0	1.6	5.6	3.2	1.3	1.4	13.1	3.8	1.8	5.6
	sum		2	.0	1.6	5.6	3.2	1.3	1.4	13.1	3.8	1.8	5.6
	Pike - San Isabel	forest mgt	1	.0	.0	3.0	1.0	.0	.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	3.0
	sum		1	.0	.0	3.0	1.0	.0	.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	3.0
	White River	forest mgt	1	.0	.7	.0	.0	.0	.0	.7	3.0	.0	3.0
	sum		1	.0	.7	.0	.0	.0	.0	.7	3.0	.0	3.0
sum			4	.0	2.3	8.6	4.2	1.3	1.4	17.8	8.8	2.8	11.6
Georgia	Chattahoochee - Oconee	forest mgt	13	.0	2.6	12.7	.9	.0	2.4	18.6	7.8	3.6	11.4
	sum		13	.0	2.6	12.7	.9	.0	2.4	18.6	7.8	3.6	11.4
sum			13	.0	2.6	12.7	.9	.0	2.4	18.6	7.8	3.6	11.4
Idaho	Boise	forest mgt	4	.0	18.6	.0	5.0	1.7	.0	25.3	24.3	1.9	26.2
	sum		4	.0	18.6	.0	5.0	1.7	.0	25.3	24.3	1.9	26.2
	Caribou	minerals	4	.0	.0	4.1	.0	.0	.0	4.1	.0	.0	.0
	sum		4	.0	.0	4.1	.0	.0	.0	4.1	.0	.0	.0
	Nez Perce	forest mgt	2	.0	14.3	.0	.0	.0	.0	14.3	15.7	.0	15.7
	sum		2	.0	14.3	.0	.0	.0	.0	14.3	15.7	.0	15.7
	Payette	forest mgt	5	.0	7.4	.0	.0	.0	.0	7.4	7.7	.0	7.7
	sum		5	.0	7.4	.0	.0	.0	.0	7.4	7.7	.0	7.7
	Salmon - Challis	forest mgt	1	.5	.5	.0	.0	.0	.0	1.0	.4	.0	.4
	sum		1	.5	.5	.0	.0	.0	.0	1.0	.4	.0	.4
	Sawtooth	minerals	1	.0	.6	.0	.0	.4	.0	1.0	.3	.0	.0
	sum		1	.0	.6	.0	.0	.4	.0	1.0	.3	.0	.0
sum			17	.5	41.4	4.1	5.0	2.1	.0	53.1	48.1	1.9	50.0
Minnesota	Superior	forest mgt	2	.0	.0	7.0	.0	.0	.6	7.6	4.2	.0	4.2

State	Forest	Project Type	Projects	Direct Reconstruction (Miles)	Direct Construction (Miles)	Direct Temporary (Miles)	Indirect Reconstruction (Miles)	Indirect Construction (Miles)	Indirect Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Direct Volume (MMBF)	Indirect Volume (MMBF)	Total Volume (MMBF)
	sum		2	.0	.0	7.0	.0	.0	.6	7.6	4.2	.0	4.2
********** sum			2	.0	.0	7.0	.0	.0	.6	7.6	4.2	.0	4.2
Montana	Beaverhead - Deerlodge	forest mgt	2	.0	.0	1.3	.0	.0	.0	1.3	.5	.0	.5
	********** sum		2	.0	.0	1.3	.0	.0	.0	1.3	.5	.0	.5
	Bitterroot	forest mgt	2	.0	3.5	.4	.0	.0	.0	3.9	2.1	.5	2.6
	********** sum		2	.0	3.5	.4	.0	.0	.0	3.9	2.1	.5	2.6
	Gallatin	forest mgt	1	.0	12.7	.0	.0	.0	.0	12.7	7.3	.0	7.3
		recreation	2	.0	4.2	.0	.0	.0	.0	4.2	.0	.0	.0
	********** sum		3	.0	16.9	.0	.0	.0	.0	16.9	7.3	.0	7.3
	Helena	forest mgt	1	.0	.0	5.0	.0	.0	.0	5.0	4.4	.0	4.4
	********** sum		1	.0	.0	5.0	.0	.0	.0	5.0	4.4	.0	4.4
	Kootenai	recreation	1	.0	5.0	.0	12.0	.0	.0	17.0	1.5	.5	2.0
	********** sum		1	.0	5.0	.0	12.0	.0	.0	17.0	1.5	.5	2.0
	Lewis and Clark	recreation	1	.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0
	********** sum		1	.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0
********** sum			10	.1	25.4	6.7	12.0	.0	.0	44.2	15.8	1.0	16.8
New Hampshire	White Mountain	forest mgt	2	.0	1.0	.3	.5	.0	.0	1.8	4.0	.0	4.0
	********** sum		2	.0	1.0	.3	.5	.0	.0	1.8	4.0	.0	4.0
********** sum			2	.0	1.0	.3	.5	.0	.0	1.8	4.0	.0	4.0
North Carolina	National Forests in North Carolina	forest mgt	1	.0	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0	.5	.4	.0	.4
	********** sum		1	.0	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0	.5	.4	.0	.4
********** sum			1	.0	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0	.5	.4	.0	.4
North Dakota	Dakota Prairie Grassland	minerals	4	.0	2.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	2.0	.0	.0	.0
		recreation	1	.2	.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.3	.0	.0	.0
	********** sum		5	.2	2.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	2.3	.0	.0	.0
********** sum			5	.2	2.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	2.3	.0	.0	.0
Oregon	Wallowa - Whitman	forest mgt	1	.0	.0	4.7	.0	.0	.0	4.7	2.6	.0	2.6
	********** sum		1	.0	.0	4.7	.0	.0	.0	4.7	2.6	.0	2.6
********** sum			1	.0	.0	4.7	.0	.0	.0	4.7	2.6	.0	2.6

State	Forest	Project Type	Projects	Direct Reconstruction (Miles)	Direct Construction (Miles)	Direct Temporary (Miles)	Indirect Reconstruction (Miles)	Indirect Construction (Miles)	Indirect Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Direct Volume (MMBF)	Indirect Volume (MMBF)	Total Volume (MMBF)
Tennessee	Cherokee	forest mgt	11	.0	2.2	7.7	.0	.0	.0	9.9	7.0	.0	7.0
	sum		11	.0	2.2	7.7	.0	.0	.0	9.9	7.0	.0	7.0
sum			11	.0	2.2	7.7	.0	.0	.0	9.9	7.0	.0	7.0
Utah	Ashley	forest mgt	2	18.7	.5	12.5	.0	.0	.0	31.7	8.6	.0	8.6
	sum		2	18.7	.5	12.5	.0	.0	.0	31.7	8.6	.0	8.6
	Dixie	access	4	.0	1.4	.0	1.0	.0	.0	2.4	.0	.0	.0
		forest mgt	4	.0	3.7	9.6	.0	.0	.0	13.3	18.0	.0	18.0
		recreation	1	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0	.0	.5	.0	.0	.0
	sum		9	.0	5.6	9.6	1.0	.0	.0	16.2	18.0	.0	18.0
	Manti - La Sal	forest mgt	1	.0	.0	8.6	.0	.0	.0	8.6	10.0	.0	10.0
	sum		1	.0	.0	8.6	.0	.0	.0	8.6	10.0	.0	10.0
sum			12	18.7	6.1	30.7	1.0	.0	.0	56.5	36.6	.0	36.6
Virginia	George Washington	fire	1	.0	.0	3.0	.0	.0	.0	3.0	.0	.0	.0
		forest mgt	4	.0	4.0	3.8	.0	1.7	4.3	13.8	5.7	1.4	7.1
		watershed	1	.0	2.6	.0	.0	.0	.0	2.6	.0	.0	.0
	sum		6	.0	6.6	6.8	.0	1.7	4.3	19.4	5.7	1.4	7.1
	Jefferson	forest mgt	5	.5	3.5	1.3	.0	.0	.0	5.3	4.3	.0	4.3
	sum		5	.5	3.5	1.3	.0	.0	.0	5.3	4.3	.0	4.3
sum			11	.5	10.1	8.1	.0	1.7	4.3	24.7	10.0	1.4	11.4
Washington	Colville	forest mgt	1	.0	4.2	.0	.0	.0	.0	4.2	4.1	.0	4.1
	sum		1	.0	4.2	.0	.0	.0	.0	4.2	4.1	.0	4.1
	Okanogan	forest mgt	2	.0	12.3	.0	.0	.0	.0	12.3	10.9	.0	10.9
	sum		2	.0	12.3	.0	.0	.0	.0	12.3	10.9	.0	10.9
sum			3	.0	16.5	.0	.0	.0	.0	16.5	15.0	.0	15.0
West Virginia	Monongahela	forest mgt	3	.0	2.3	1.7	9.7	.0	.0	13.7	6.8	.0	6.8
		minerals	3	.0	7.0	.0	3.0	2.0	.0	12.0	.0	.0	.0
	sum		6	.0	9.3	1.7	12.7	2.0	.0	25.7	6.8	.0	6.8
sum			6	.0	9.3	1.7	12.7	2.0	.0	25.7	6.8	.0	6.8
Wyoming	Bridger - Teton	forest mgt	3	1.0	.0	3.8	.0	.0	.0	4.8	2.4	.0	2.4
		minerals	4	6.0	23.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	29.0	.0	.0	.0

State	Forest	Project Type	Projects	Direct Reconstruction (Miles)	Direct Construction (Miles)	Direct Temporary (Miles)	Indirect Reconstruction (Miles)	Indirect Construction (Miles)	Indirect Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Direct Volume (MMBF)	Indirect Volume (MMBF)	Total Volume (MMBF)
	sum		7	7.0	23.0	3.8	.0	.0	.0	33.8	2.4	.0	2.4
Wyoming	Medicine Bow - Routt	forest mgt	2	.0	20.1	3.3	1.3	.0	.0	24.7	14.4	.0	14.4
	**********												
	sum		2	.0	20.1	3.3	1.3	.0	.0	24.7	14.4	.0	14.4
	Shoshone	forest mgt	3	.0	2.8	4.2	.0	.0	.0	7.0	5.0	.0	5.0
	**********												
	sum		3	.0	2.8	4.2	.0	.0	.0	7.0	5.0	.0	5.0
**********													
sum			12	7.0	45.9	11.3	1.3	.0	.0	65.5	21.8	.0	21.8
sum			112	27.0	176.3	104.1	37.6	14.2	8.7	367.9	188.9	10.7	199.6

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Region	Forest	Sales	Reconstruction (Miles)	Construction (Miles)	Temporary (Miles)	Total (Miles)	Volume (MMBF)
1	Beaverhead - Deerlodge	2	.0	.0	1.3	1.3	.5
	Bitterroot	2	.0	3.5	.4	3.9	2.6
	Gallatin	1	.0	12.7	.0	12.7	7.3
	Helena	1	.0	.0	5.0	5.0	4.4
	Nez Perce	2	.0	14.3	.0	14.3	15.7
****** sum		8	.0	30.5	6.7	37.2	30.5
2	Grand Mesa - Uncompahgre - Gunnison	2	3.2	2.9	7.0	13.1	5.6
	Medicine Bow - Routt	2	1.3	20.1	3.3	24.7	14.4
	Pike - San Isabel	1	1.0	.0	3.0	4.0	3.0
	Shoshone	3	.0	2.8	4.2	7.0	5.0
	White River	1	.0	.7	.0	.7	3.0
****** sum		9	5.5	26.5	17.5	49.5	31.0
4	Ashley	2	18.7	.5	12.5	31.7	8.6
	Boise	4	5.0	20.3	.0	25.3	26.2
	Bridger - Teton	3	1.0	.0	3.8	4.8	2.4
	Dixie	4	.0	3.7	9.6	13.3	18.0
	Manti - La Sal	1	.0	.0	8.6	8.6	10.0
	Payette	5	.0	7.4	.0	7.4	7.7
	Salmon - Challis	1	.5	.5	.0	1.0	.4
****** sum		20	25.2	32.4	34.5	92.1	73.3
6	Colville	1	.0	4.2	.0	4.2	4.1
	Okanogan	2	.0	12.3	.0	12.3	10.9
	Wallowa - Whitman	1	.0	.0	4.7	4.7	2.6
****** sum		4	.0	16.5	4.7	21.2	17.6
8	Chattahoochee - Oconee	13	.9	2.6	15.1	18.6	11.4
	Cherokee	11	.0	2.2	7.7	9.9	7.0
	George Washington	4	.0	5.7	8.1	13.8	7.1
	Jefferson	5	.5	3.5	1.3	5.3	4.3
	National Forests in North Carolina	1	.0	.0	.5	.5	.4
****** sum		34	1.4	14.0	32.7	48.1	30.2
9	Monongahela	3	9.7	2.3	1.7	13.7	6.8
	Superior	2	.0	.0	7.6	7.6	4.2
	White Mountain	2	.5	1.0	.3	1.8	4.0
****** sum		7	10.2	3.3	9.6	23.1	15.0
sum		82	42.3	123.2	105.7	271.2	197.6

USDA, Forest Service
Annual Maintenance, Deferred Maintenance, and Capital Improvement Needs
As Reported by Field Units
January, 1999

(Dollars in Thousands)

Program	Annual Maint.	Deferred Maint.	Capital Improvement
Bldg. & Admin. Facils	$112,350	$521,085	$1,318,425
Dams	$1,186	$31,027	(1)
Heritage Assets	$6,011	$49,703	(2)
Range Improvements	$233	$388,962	$21,096
Recreation Facilities	$112,900	$1,141,354	(2)
Roads and Bridges	$431,000	$3,849,000	$2,120,000
Trails	$90,352	$519,083	(2)
Watershed Imprvmnts	$3,485	$5,690	$11,951
Wildlife, Fish, TES	$6,994	$30,698	$45,777

(1) Capital Improvements for dams are included in the various benefitting programs such as recreation, wildlife, etc.
(2) A list of new construction projects was not developed for Heritage Assessts, Recreation facilities or Trails. The Regions prioritize new construction needs with rehabilitation/repair needs.

Administrative Facilities - The administrative facilities program manages over 25,000 buildings with a current replacement value of over $3.5 billion. The administrative buildings consist of offices, fire operations, quarters, service buildings, etc. Over 60 percent of the administrative buildings have exceeded their design life and are in need of major renovation and/or replacement. At our current level of FA&O funding, the replacement cycle for the administrative buildings is over 300 years. The current maintenance funding level provides less than one percent of the asset value compared to the industry standard of 3 to 4 percent. This will continue the deferred maintenance backlog to grow.

Dams - The Forest Service operates and maintains approximately 1200 dams that provide recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, flood control, and water supplies for fire protection, stock watering, irrigation, and drinking water. Half of these dams were built prior to 1961, and less than one percent within the last five years. Technical work, including maintenance, is funded by benefitting function based on the purpose of the dam. Because of limited funds, dams maintenance projects deal primarily with critical health and safety, and resource protection needs.

Heritage Assets - The Heritage Program is designed to protect the historic and cultural heritage of America's national forests, and to share historical and cultural information with the public for their enjoyment and education. The USDA Forest Service manages about 270,000 heritage assets spread across 191 million acres. These assets include prehistoric artifacts, old mining and logging camps, historic structures, and museum collections. For purposes of this report, and for consistency with the Financial Report of the Forest Service, these figures refer only to heritage structures. A comprehensive survey of all other heritage assets is currently underway and future reports will include this additional information.

Range Management - The Range program manages structural improvements that are constructed to achieve vegetation and other objectives on National Forest System lands. These improvements, located on approximately 92 million acres of all system lands, are generally constructed with Forest Service purchased materials by the livestock grazing permittees on allotments where they hold

JUNEAU, AK Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, February 22, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
John Mazor	Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau	907-586-1737	369 S. Franklin St., #203	Juneau, AK 99801
Tim Bristol	SE Alaska Conservation Council	907-586-6942	419 Sixth St., Suite 328	Juneau, AK 99801
Jim Mackovjak	Tongass Community Alliance	907-697-2246	Box 117	Gustavus, AK 99826
Jerry McCune	United Fishermen of Alaska	907-586-2820	211 4th St., Suite 110	Juneau, AK 99801
Jack Phelps	Alaska Forest Association	907-225-6114	111 Stedman, Suite 200	Ketchikan, AK 99901
Jeff Sloss	Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association	907-586-4275	740 5th St.	Juneau, AK 99801
Larry Johannsen	Alaska Sightseeing Tours, Inc.	907-586-6300	76 Egan Dr., #320	Juneau, AK 99801
Errol Champion	Silver Bay Logging	907-789-9033	8429 Livingston Way	Juneau, AK 99801

SACRAMENTO, CA Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, February 24, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Sheri Davis	Inland Empire Film Commission	909-890-1090	301 E. Vanderbilt Way, #100	San Bernadino, CA 92408
Kent Duysen	Sierra Forest Products	559-535-4893	PO Box 10060	Terra Bella, CA 93270
Kenneth Nelson	OHV Commission	530-283-2262	PO Box 236	Quincy, CA 95921
Dana Bell	American Motorcyclist Association	562-438-6527	5764 Campo Walk	Long Beach, CA 90803
Jay Watson	The Wilderness Society	415-561-6641	Presidio Bldg. 1016, PO Box 29241	San Francisco, CA 94129
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	209-586-7440	Box 396	Twain Harte, CA 95383
Jerry Broom	Blue Lake Forest Products	707-822-2918	Box 1176	Arcata, CA 95518
Paul Spitler	California Wilderness Coalition	530-758-0380	2655 Portage Bay East, #5	Davis, CA 95616

ATLANTA, GA Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 3, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Bill Thomas	North Carolina Sierra Club	828-885-8229	PO Box 272	Cedar Mountain, NC 28718
Eric Lundqvist	American Motorcyclist Association	614-856-1910 x1225	13515 Yarmouth Dr.	Pickerington, OH 43147
David James	(unaffiliated conservationist)	404-508-6091	22 Fairfield Drive	Avondale Estates, GA 30002
Ken Wills	Alabama Environmental Council	205-322-3126	2717 7th Ave. S., Suite 207	Birmingham, AL 35233
Dennis Martin	Georgia Forestry Commission	770-531-6043	3005 Atlanta Highway	Gainsville, GA 30507

MILWAUKEE, WI Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 4, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Larry R. Frye	Indiana Hardwood Lumberman's Assoc.	317-873-8780	PO Box 5046	Zionsville, IN 46077
Marvin Roberson	Sierra Club	414-332-6553	2754 N. Stowell Ave.	Milwaukee, WI 53211
Tim O'Hara	Minnesota Forest Industries	218-722-5013	903 Medical Arts Building	Duluth, MN 55802
Bill Hennigan	Sawyer Lumber Company	906-346-3216	650 Avenue A	Gwinn, MI 49841
Paul Klocko	American Pulpwood Association	715-842-3471	2403 Stewart So.	Wausau, WI 54401

BOISE, ID Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 8, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Chet Bowers	IWF	208-376-8787	6912 Randolph Dr.	Boise, ID 83709
W.R. Bachman	Croman Corp.	208-344-0888	1625 Yamhill Rd.	Boise, ID 83716
John McCarthy	Idaho Conservation League	208-345-6933	Box 844	Boise, ID 83701
Roger Williams	Idaho Trails Council	208-888-3506	4915 Larry Lane	Meridian, ID 83642
Gina Patton	Wolf Education & Research Center	208-343-2248	PO Box 917	Boise, ID 83701
Jane Gorsuch	Intermountain Forest Industry Association	208-342-3454	350 N. 9th St., Suite 304E	Boise, ID 83702
Al Kiler	Idaho Bird Hunters Association	208-376-3109	1916 Amber	Boise, ID 83706
Tom Richards	Equine Groups	208-365-3799	7999 Merril Rd.	Emmett, ID 83617
Don Smith	Alliance for the Wild Rockies	208-386-8014	1714 Heron St.	Boise, ID 83702
Liz Paul	Idaho Rivers United	208-343-7481	PO Box 633	Boise, ID 83701
Craig Gehrke	The Wilderness Society	208-343-8153	413 W. Idaho St., #102	Boise, ID 83702
Mitch Sanchotena	Idaho Steelhead & Salmon	208-345-4438	4466 Greer Circle	Boise, ID 83703
Ernest Lombard	Idaho State Parks	208-939-3311	3590 N. Ballantyne Ln.	Eagle, ID 83616

SEATTLE, WA Employee attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 9, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Region, Series - Grade	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Bob Emley	10, 802-9	907-228-6332	USFS Supervisor's Office, Fed. Bldg.	Ketchikan, AK 99901
Sue Kesti	10, 460-11	907-424-7661	Box 280 (Cordova R.D.)	Cordova, AK 99574
Zuma Martin	1, 334-11	406-329-3158	200 E. Broadway (RO R-1)	Missoula, MT 59807
Bonnie McElmurry	10, 501-11	907-586-8717	PO Box 22524	Juneau, AK 99802
Cheri Ford	10, 466-9	907-828-3211	PO Box 19001	Thorne Bay, AK 99919
Ron Meyers	1, 810-11	406-791-7733	PO Box 869	Great Falls, MT 59405
Lynne Dickman	1, 1350-11	406-363-7144	Bitterroot Nat'l Forest 1801 N. 1st St.	Hamilton, MT 59840
Kathleen Nelson	5, 430-11	760-873-2498	Inyo Nat'l Forest 873 N. Main St.	Bishop, CA 93514
Betsy Carroll	5, 460-12	530-642-5106	Eldorado Nat'l Forest 100 Forni Rd.	Placerville, CA 95667

PORTLAND, OR Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 10, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Glen Spain	Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Assoc.	541-689-2000	PO Box 11170	Eugene, OR 97440-3370
Tim Wigley	Oregon Forest Industy Council	503-371-2942	PO Box 12826	Salem, OR 97309
Chris West	Northwest Foresiry Association	503-222-9505	1500 SW First, Suite 770	Portland, OR 97201
Steve Courtney	Malheur Lumber Company	541-575-2054	PO Box 160	John Day, OR 97845
Cary Jones	Douglas Timber Operators	541-672-0757	3000 Stewart Parkway, Suite 209	Roseburg, OR 97470
Rex Storm	Associated Oregon Loggers	503-364-1330	PO Box 12339	Salem, OR 97309
Ken Rait	Oregon Natural Resources Council	503-283-6343	5825 N. Greeley Ave.	Portland, OR 97212
Terry Lamers	Oregon Small Woodlands Association	503-588-1613	1775 NE 32nd Place, Suite C	Salem, OR 97303
Mark Lawler	Sierra Club	206-632-1550	4316 Whitman Avenue North	Seattle, WA 98103
Jeff Parsons	National Audubon Society	360-786-6026	PO Box 462	Olympia, WA 98507

MISSOULA, MT Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 11, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Doug Abelin	MTVRA	406-449-7353	1055 Mill Road	Helena, MT 59602
John Grove	Friends of Bitterroot	406-777-2423	PO Box 77	Stevensville, MT 59870
Jim DeBree	Watershed Council	406-822-3041	Box 686	Superior, MT 59872
Tim Stevens	Greater Yellowstone Coalition	406-586-1593	PO Box 1874	Bozeman, MT 59771
Alex Irby	Konkolville Lumber Company	208-476-4597	PO Box 1208	Orofino, ID 83549
Kent Henderson	Idaho Wildlife Federation	208-746-9046	2405 Fifth Street	Lewiston, ID 83501
Don McPherson	Back Country Horsemen	208-926-0385	Box 68	Kooskia, ID 83539
John Adams	Montana Wilderness Association	406-327-0810	127 East Main, #320	Missoula, MT 59802
Rich Lane	Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation	406-626-5294	PO Box 16045	Missoula, MT 59808
Greg Schildwachter	Intermountain Forest Industry Association	406-542-1220	200 E. Pine	Missoula, MT 59802
Bruce Farling	Montana Trout Unlimited	406-543-0054	Box 7166	Missoula, MT 59807
Stephen Flynn	Louisiana Pacific	406-846-1600	Box 369	Deer Lodge, MT 59722
Tom Youngblood-Petersen	Wildlands CPR	406-543-9551	PO Box 7516	Missoula, MT 59807
Gordy Sanders	Pyramid Mountain Lumber	406-677-2201	PO Box 549	Seeley Lake, MT 59868

ALBUQUERQUE, NM Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 15, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Susan Krentz	Arizona State Cowbelles	520-558-2252	Box 3592	Douglas, AZ 85608
Judy Keeler	Bootheel Heritage Association	505-548-2520	PO Box 469	Animas, NM 88020
Derrick Ashcroft	Flying X Ranch	505-743-3798	HC 30 Box 60	Monticello, NM 87939
Cordy Cowan	Cloverdale Cattle Company	505-548-2247	H 65 Box 185	Animas, NM 88020
Gary Keller	Arizona State Association of 4WD Clubs	602-832-1495	531 N. Los Alamos	Mesa, AZ 85213
Tom Jervis	New Mexico Audubon Council	505-662-5287	60 Barranca Road	Los Alamos, NM 87544
Roger Pattison	New Mexico OHV Coalition	505-985-2374	2343 SR 209	Clovis, NM 88101
Mark Weikmeister	Southwest Four-Wheel Drive Association	505-891-0298	1700 Willow Rd. NE	Rio Rancho, NM 87124
Fred Ruskin	Yavapai Ranch	602-948-6080	7528 N. Clearwater Parkway	Scottsdale, AZ 85253
Darrell Brown	Yates Ranches	505-457-2650	PO Box 1261	Artesia, NM 88211

DENVER, CO Attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 16, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Organization Represented	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Tim Kyllo	Louisiana Pacific	970-874-1330	PO Box 763	Delta, CO 81416
Gary Jones	Colorado Timber Industry Association	970-247-4648	Suite 275, 10 Town Plaza	Durango, CO 81301
Jack Welch	Colorado Snowmobile Association	303-279-8436	246 Holman Way	Golden, CO 80401
Tom Troxel	Intermountain Forest Industry Association	605-341-0875	2040 W. Main, #315	Rapid City, SD 57702
Gene W. King	Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition	303-425-7480	6076 W. 90th Dr.	Westminster, CO 80021
Terry Sandmeier	Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society	303-838-6311	PO Box 771	Conifer, CO 80433
Alice Gustin	Wind River Multiple Use Advocates	307-856-3699	PO Box 1126	Riverton, WY 82501
Bob Moore	Argonne National Laboratory	303-988-1140 x245	1075 S. Yukon Street, Suite 209	Lakewood, CO 80226-4333
Suzanne Jones	The Wilderness Society	303-650-5818 x102	7475 Dakin St., #410	Denver, CO 80221
Myrna Johnson	Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America	303-444-3353 x101	PO Box 1319	Boulder, CO 80304

DENVER, CO Employee attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 17, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Region, Series - Grade	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
Jim Kocer	3, 810-13	505-842-3830	517 Gold Ave SW	Albuquerque, NM 87111
Pam Winn	4, 602-11	801-524-3935	Wasatch-Cache NF, 125 S. State St.	Salt Lake City, UT 84138
Greg Visconty	4, 1350-11	208-392-6681	Boise NF, Idaho City Dist. PO Box 129	Idaho City, ID 83631
Karen Ogle	4, 408-11	435-865-3774	Dixie NF, Supervisor's Offc. 82 N 100 E	Cedar City, UT 84720
Loren Paulsen	2, 023-9	970-242-8211	Grand Junct. RD, 2777 Crossroads Blvd.	Grand Junction, CO 81506
Marjorie Apodaca	3, 810-12	505-842-3852	517 Gold Ave SW	Albuquerque, NM 87111
Arturo Montoya	3, 802-7	505-438-7881	1474 Rodeo Rd.	Sante Fe, NM 87504
Ruth Doyle	3, 807-11	505-438-7923	1474 Rodeo Rd.	Sante Fe, NM 87504
Elaina Graham	2, 401-9	719-852-6265	1603 West US Highway 160	Monte Vista, CO 81144
Bryan Fons	2, 1001-5	303-275-5348	601 S. Weburs	Colorado Springs, CO 80903

WASHINGTON, DC Employee attendees at USDA Forest Service Focus Group, March 18, 1999
Long Term Roads Policy

Name	Region, Series - Grade	Telephone	Address	City, State Zip
George Moeller	WO, 460-15	202-205-0428	792 N. Vermont St.	Arlington, VA 22203
Alan Polk	8, 460-13	706-695-6736	235 Apache Trail	Chatsworth, GA 30705
Joe Erwin	WO, 334-9	202-205-0497	201 14th Street SW	Washington, DC 20250
Bruce Slover	9, 340-13	218-365-7600	4th Avenue E.	Ely, MN 55731
Jane Darnell	9, 301-11	715-748-4875	850 N. 8th St.	Medford, WI 54451
John Davis	9, 193-11	616-775-2421	1755 S. Mitchell	Cadillac, MI 49601
Pam Stachler	9, 1315-09	740-592-6644	219 Columbus Rd.	Athens, GA 45701
Bud Risner	WO, 401-13	202-205-0583	14th & Independence Ave. SW	Washington, DC 20090
Art Johnston	9, 810-11	715-762-5112	170 S. 4th Avenue	Park Falls, WI 54552

Design Plan:
USFS Long-Term Road Policy Focus Groups

This document outlines BBC Research & Consulting's plan to conduct twelve focus groups for the USDA Forest Service (USFS) related to the development of the agency's Long Term Road Policy. This Focus Group Design Plan is structured to answer the following questions:

- Why are focus groups being held?
- Who will participate in the discussions?
- What are the guidelines of the focus group sessions?
- Where will the meetings be held?
- When will the focus groups be conducted?
- How will focus groups be administered?

The remainder of this document answers these questions.

Why?

The USFS is seeking to obtain information from specific interested groups, both outside stakeholders and internal USFS employees, that will help the agency identify desired objectives and outcomes of the Long Term Road Policy. The information gained from the focus groups will include identification of desirable goals for the Policy; perceptions about the challenges and opportunities related to the Policy; alternative viewpoints about specific issues and outcomes; and ideas for reconciling contradictory or competing objectives.

The USFS is not seeking information about the process by which the agency should implement the policy. Specifically, the USFS is looking for guidance with respect to "What

should be included in the Policy," not "How should we implement the Policy." This distinction will be important as we develop discussion guides and begin to hold the focus group sessions.

Who?

Nine focus group discussions will be held with external stakeholders and three sessions with internal stakeholders.

External stakeholders. External stakeholders representing a broad range of different interests will be invited to participate in the focus group sessions. The USFS project administrator has requested that each Forest Service Region submit a list of potential invitees, and that list will be forwarded to BBC. Examples of the specific organizations that might be invited to participate in the focus groups include the Association of Consulting Foresters, the Lake States Lumbermen's Association, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Voight Inter-Tribal Task Force, the Center for Environmental Advocacy, and the Wisconsin ATV Association. (Note that these are examples only; the named organizations may or may not be invited to participate in the focus groups.)

Because a limited number of individuals will be able to participate in the sessions, we intend to select invitees on a random basis. Once the random selection process has been completed we will then review the draft invitee list and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that, on a national basis, a broad spectrum of interests have been invited to participate. Realistically, of course, this means that not every interested group in every Region will be selected to attend the focus groups. Any individual or organization who is interested in submitting feedback regarding the USFS Long Term Road Policy should be encouraged to participate in the next Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) process, which will likely be held concurrently with the focus group effort.

Internal stakeholders. As with the external stakeholder discussions, we intend to recruit internal USFS participants so as to ensure that a broad range of different experience levels and job functions are represented. We also intend to cover a broad geographic area in each of the three sessions. With the assistance of the project administrator, we will randomly select job titles or functions and assign them to the Regional or District offices. Each office will be asked to send a staff person from their assigned functional areas. For example, Region 9 may be asked to send a staff person representing Forestry Technician and Program Analyst positions, Region 3 may be asked to send a District Ranger and Wildlife Researcher, and so on. To ensure a diversity of opinions and viewpoints, we will make these assignments on a random basis. However, to encourage open and honest feedback during the focus group sessions, we will seek to ensure that individuals invited from any one Region do not report to each other.

What?

Guidelines for focus group discussions include the following:

- ***Informal but structured group discussions.*** To the participants, a focus group session will feel like an informal, free-flowing discussion. However, the moderator will be utilizing a structured focus group guide to ensure that all topics of interest are covered during the session.

- ***Led by an impartial facilitator.*** A BBC employee will lead each focus group. Any USFS employees who attend the external sessions for purposes of contract administration will be asked to remain quiet observers and should not in any way participate in the discussion or convey their impressions of the discussion through body language or other means.

- ***Designed to elicit honest thoughts, perceptions, ideas, feelings and values.*** The purpose of the focus group approach is to learn about participants' thoughts and perceptions, not necessarily to gather facts.

- ***Not intended as educational sessions.*** These sessions are not intended to educate focus group participants. If a participant has a perception about an issue that in fact is inaccurate, our role as moderator is not to correct or inform. Our role is to probe for information about why the participant has that perception. The USFS can then use that information, for example, to develop an educational or information campaign to correct those types of misperceptions.

- ***Structured to obtain a wide range of different viewpoints.*** A broad range of different interests and viewpoints will be represented in these sessions. We do not anticipate gaining agreement or consensus on every issue; rather, we will identify areas of agreement and areas of disagreement, and also ways to address or potentially reconcile some of those issues.

- ***Resulting in anonymous feedback.*** Specific quotes and feedback will not be sourced. Comments will be consolidated and summarized anonymously.

- ***Summarized into areas of agreement and disagreement.*** In analyzing the focus group transcripts, we look for patterns of responses, and areas of agreement and disagreement.

The focus group moderator can use several different approaches to obtain open and honest feedback. For example, the discussion guide consists largely of open-ended questions that the moderator asks. Individuals can respond to the questions in an unstructured format. The moderator does not "call" on anyone unless an individual has not been participating or appears reticent about offering his or her opinion. Another approach is to put a statement on a flip chart or board and ask who agrees or disagrees with the statement and why. A third approach is to write an incomplete statement on the flip chart and ask participants to complete the sentence, and then discuss their answers.

An effective mechanism for gathering information about people's values and priorities, and their willingness to make tradeoffs, is the use of conjoint analysis. This is an exercise using a series of 9 to 12 cards, each of which lists a different scenario. Individuals are asked to rank the scenarios, most preferred to least preferred. This ranking process forces people to make choices with respect to different cost/benefit tradeoffs. The resulting rankings are then analyzed statistically, so we can determine what different groups of people's values and priorities truly are. BBC's budget for the USFS focus groups does not include a conjoint exercise; however, we believe this would be a strong addition to the analysis and suggest the agency consider conducting this analysis as part of the focus groups.

Where?

External stakeholder meetings will be held in Missoula, Denver, Albuquerque, Ogden, Sacramento, Portland, Atlanta, Milwaukee, and Anchorage. BBC is flexible as to substituting different cities if necessary, provided that travel expenses are not substantially higher and that adequate notice is given to make or change travel arrangements.

Internal stakeholder meetings will be held in Washington, D.C., Seattle and Denver.

BBC will arrange to hold the meetings in easily-accessible, non-USFS locations in each designated city. For example, sessions could be scheduled at a public library, community college, or hotel meeting room.

When?

Dates. Based on feedback from the Road Policy Committee, we anticipate that the focus groups will be held in November or later.

Times. External stakeholder focus groups will be scheduled for weekday evenings, typically from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Internal stakeholder focus groups will be held during working hours on weekdays.

How?

The administrative elements of conducting the focus groups are described here, including recruiting, session administration, discussion guides, and final work product development.

Recruiting of participants. BBC will recruit external stakeholder participants from a list of individuals provided by each Forest Service Region. Invitees will initially be selected randomly, with a review after initial selection to ensure that we have a broad range of stakeholder interests represented nation-wide.

Internal stakeholders will also be recruited using a random selection process to include different staff levels, areas of expertise, and professions. Each Regional and District office will be randomly assigned job titles, and they will be asked to send a staff person from that job title to the focus group session. Once internal participants have been selected, we recommend that an introductory letter from the Chief be issued to the participants. The letter would explain the reason for the focus groups and would encourage the individuals to participate openly and honestly.

In addition, we suggest that the USFS prepare a fact sheet and send it to all external and internal participants prior to the focus group meetings. The intent of this fact sheet would be to inform participants of the purpose of the focus groups, and to distinguish between this Long Term Road Policy issue and the moratorium issue.

Finally, we recommend that each Regional and District office be informed about how external and internal focus group participants are being selected. We anticipate that there will

be questions among those organizations or individuals who were not invited to participate in the sessions. Those individuals should be informed about the ANPR process, which will be held concurrently with the focus groups.

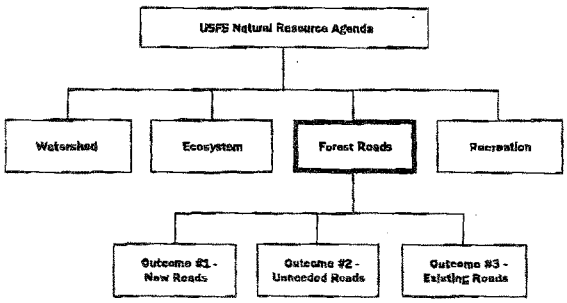
Focus group sessions. Each session will include from 10 to 14 participants. In order to ensure adequate attendance levels, we typically over-recruit by 20 to 50 percent, depending on location of session, origin of participants, and time of year sessions are being held (e.g., in general we tend to have more no-shows during winter months because of weather unpredictability).

Sessions will last approximately two hours but may be extended by one half hour if we determine it is necessary to do so. BBC will provide light refreshments at each session.

Discussion guides. BBC will develop two separate focus group discussion guides, one for the external and one for the internal sessions. We anticipate that a core group of discussion topics will be the same for both groups.

The discussions will begin with an overview of the USFS Natural Resource Agenda and Forest Roads Policy:

EXHIBIT 1.
USFS Natural Resource Agenda

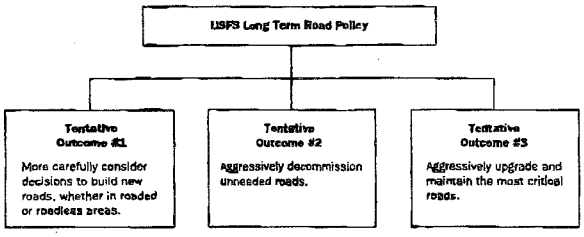


We will then present the existing tentative long-term road policy statement to use as a framework for discussion. We will present this policy statement as an alternative being considered, not as a formal, final position statement.

> "The USFS will provide the minimum forest road system that best serves the current and anticipated future management objectives and public uses of national forests and grasslands, and ensure that the road system provides for safe public use, economically affordable and efficient management, and minimal ecological impacts."

Then we will present the three tentative road policy outcomes to the discussion participants:

EXHIBIT 2.
USFS Long Term Road Policy



The three specific tentative policy outcomes include:

1. The USFS will more carefully consider decisions to build new roads, whether in already roaded or roadless areas.

2. The USFS will aggressively decommission unneeded roads.

3. The USFS will aggressively upgrade and maintain the most critical roads.

The general tone that we will take in presenting these policy outcomes to the focus group participants is, "The USFS has been working on this issue for a while. On the basis of their work so far, they have developed these three ideas. We would like your thoughts about these ideas, so the Forest Service can proceed in some way."

These three tentative policy outcomes are what will frame our specific focus group discussion questions. Specifically, we will probe for participants' reactions to each statement, and will seek to identify their thoughts, feelings, and ideas related to each outcome. We will ask what they like or don't like about the outcomes statements; the anticipated implications of each outcome; and their suggestions for alternative outcomes statements. We will ask how effective each policy statement might be, and what the favorable and unfavorable impacts might be. We will also seek to have participants prioritize these issues and describe how they might make tradeoffs with respect to outcomes, cost and other factors. We will also, as appropriate, probe for willingness to pay issues.

The Roads Policy subcommittee has reviewed the public comments received from the ANPR process and has categorized the comments as they relate to each of the three outcomes statements. These comments will be used to formulate specific focus group discussion guide questions.

Concurrent to presenting these three outcomes statements, we will acknowledge to participants that there are additional issues that have been identified through the public input process already. For example, a number of public comments were submitted related to the issues of analysis, funding, and process. We will briefly discuss these additional issues in the focus groups; however, since they are separate from the core elements of the Long Term Road Policy we do not anticipate discussing these issues in detail. We will also ask participants for any additional issues that need to be addressed in the Long Term Road Policy. We will then get participants' feedback and prioritization of these topics.

BBC will draft the focus group guides and submit them to the Roads Policy Committee for review, comment and approval prior to beginning the scheduling of the sessions.

Work product. Focus group sessions will be audiotaped and proceedings will be transcribed anonymously; i.e., quotes and comments will not be sourced to any participant by name. Findings will be analyzed and summarized separately for the external and internal sessions. In particular we will identify and describe any trends, areas of agreement and disagreement.

The final work product will be a written report, as well as an oral presentation in preparation for the Chief's Forum.